

PZ
8.2
L569f

A
A
0
0
0
0
0
8
0
1
6
2
1



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

754
20

Fables

FOR

THE FIRE-SIDE.

DEDICATED TO

THE MARCHIONESS OF DOUGLAS AND CLYDESDALE.

BY JOHN LETTICE, D.D.

A NEW APPLICATION OF THESE FABLES TO *THREE* IMPORTANT OBJECTS OF
EDUCATION IS EXPLAINED IN THE INTRODUCTION.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR AND SOLD BY JAMES BLACK,
YORK-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN. :

SOLD ALSO BY BLACK, PARRY, AND CO. LEADENHALL-STREET ;
GALE AND CURTIS, PATERNOSTER-ROW ; AND
CLARKE, NEW BOND-STREET.

1812.

Anders

THE NEW YORK

AND THE NEW YORK

AND THE NEW YORK

AND THE NEW YORK

AND THE NEW YORK

AND THE NEW YORK

Hughes, Printer, Maiden-Lane, Covent-Garden.

THE author of these Fables, with each of which is connected a Praxis for the investigation of its moral, intended equally to exercise young persons of a proper age in thinking and reasoning, and deeply to impress their moral duties on the heart, requests the very respectable *Mr Wilson* — as he has done the heads of other superior seminaries, to accept his book, and, candidly examining its contents, to honour it with his sanction, as far as merited. He assures himself the Introduction will be duly attended to. Not only his literary friends, but persons of the highest rank and fashion, in whose families his book has been received, give him reason to flatter himself, that it is adapted to answer more important purposes of education than have been contemplated in any other collection of Fables in our language.

The British Critic for April, 1813, speaking of the Introduction, says, “that many sensible and judicious observations will be found on the use and moral application of apologies, as well as on the art of reading;” which the author has meant to improve by the variety of his measures, and the colloquial ease of his style. The Critic, next adverting to the new plan, intended in the moral questions or praxis for juvenile investigation and reflection, after producing specimens from the book, concludes with observing, “that many of the Fables are excellent, and the whole constitute a very pleasing volume, from which much entertainment and much instruction may be obtained.”

DEDICATION.

TO THE
MARCHIONESS OF DOUGLAS AND CLYDESDALE.

MADAM,

At a moment, when the universal education of the people of England makes the general topic of our country, may not a little work, though chiefly calculated to improve that of the middle and higher classes in its moral department, claim some share of public attention? That, which is here presented to your Ladyship, has been judged by the Author's literary friends, as it is intended by himself, an improvement on the usual methods of conveying moral impressions to the minds of youth. What the supposed improvement is will be found sufficiently explained in the Introduction to the work.

To give works of any kind, at their first publication, the best chance of attracting the attention of the world, is to place them within the notice, and, as far as they may deserve it, under the patronage of the Great. And whose notice, Madam, or patronage, for a work concerning the most important,

DEDICATION.

the moral branch of education, can with more propriety be sought than that of a lady of illustrious rank, who having, in the years of her pupilage, proved herself equally formed by superior understanding, and disposed by native goodness of heart, to do justice to every object of instruction proposed for her attainment, shines pre-eminently accomplished in the best and brightest endowments, which education can confer? That a character so distinguished, on whose merits the Author speaks but the known sentiments and language of the world, may long continue to give its truest splendour to exalted rank; to adorn and delight the most polished circles of her own sphere; and, in a licentious age, to shed on society at large the benign influence of moral example, from a height of situation which incalculably augments its weight and impression, is among the sincerest wishes of,

Madam,

Your Ladyship's

Most obedient humble servant,

JOHN LETTICE.

INTRODUCTION.

SECTION I.

Nature of this Work.

THE author of this little work once met with a formal personage, established in a creditable vocation, so puritanically solemn in his notions of the external deportment it required of him, as to have confessed with shame, that *he, one day, caught himself in the unseemly act of running*. His rigid steadiness of muscles announcing an invincible power of face, it had been needless to ask him, whether he ever caught himself *unfortunately smiling*. Should any one, of this cast of character, compare the title of the present publication with the profession and academical rank of its author, he might take alarm, and discern something as unbecoming in this title, as the above personage had discovered in the indecorous briskness of his own movements. But should persons of unaffected seriousness, and unquestioned soundness of mind, express dissatisfaction, that the book should not have

borne a graver, or more clerical front, the writer can hardly doubt they will be satisfied on being assured its main object is to instill a series of Ethical Lessons on a plan truly practical. Though some of these lessons will perhaps be thought to fall more properly under a definition of "Social Manners;" and rather to answer Aristotle's idea of the "Lesser Morals;" yet such at least emanate from principles strictly moral, as these principles do from the second table of the decalogue, and the earlier inspirations of the deity; all morality deriving its origin and authority from no other source than the will of God; which alone constitutes what philosophers have been pleased to call the eternal rules of right and wrong.

Can a performance of this nature, respecting any of its views and intentions, be otherwise than perversely conceived incongruous with the clerical character? Nay, the apologues, the primary vehicle of instruction in these pages, however remote from severity in point of stile, and wanting all, they must, of the sacred spirit, partake at least the parabolic form, in which our divine Law-giver delivered many of his precepts.

Though no further demand for explanation on this topic can well be expected, it may not be amiss, lest the livelier tone of some of these fables should not precisely harmonize with the ideas of the more respected class of Critics above adverted to, on the gravity of clerical occupation, to intimate, that none of them were written at seasons, when professional writing or research could have been pursued to any purpose. Several of them employed the writer's pencil during retired walks in his garden; and the rest were chiefly the amusement of early sleepless hours by lamp-light before a convenient time of rising. He does not recollect, that any part of the time spent in writing the fables was ever stolen from vocation or duty: the moral and intellectual exercises grounded upon them receive countenance from both, and might, not unworthily, have been dictated by either.—

When his views and intentions in the whole of this publication are made known, the employment it has required, will, he trusts, be judged no way unbecoming a quiet Recluse in his old age, anxious to keep the lamp of life competently trimmed, while yet suffered to burn, and to be found at the last irreproachably occupied by it.

SECTION II.

Composition of the Fables.

Before he explains the serious application of these apologues, and the different purposes to which he wishes them to be made subservient, he begs leave to premise three words on their technical composition. They are professedly written on the ground-work of Phædrus and La Fontaine, i. e. on the subjects of their fables; subjects conveyed to them through the dry and simple apologues of old Æsop, and to him perhaps from Lokeman and Pilpay.

They are, however, presented in the following pages, sometimes as translations, sometimes as imitations; oftener perhaps as paraphrases, with many new thoughts freely added, and those in the present writer's own manner; not from a fruitless ambition of improving upon such models; but from the desire of giving them some little air of novelty. The volumes of these delightful fabulists have, sometimes, been kept open, after reading the fable he had chosen; sometimes entirely shut again, 'till he had written the

whole. But they were always, one or other, at hand, for reperusal, or recollection.

SECTION III.

Their Title, Object, and Uses.

But to proceed to the purposes for which this publication is intended to serve, and which it may probably do the more successfully, on account of the familiar stile and manner in which the fables are written ; the author has entitled his little work, “ Fables for the Fire-side,” under an idea of recommending them more particularly to parents in middle and higher life, who educate their children at home ; and to others who, at times of school vacation, have the younger members of their families, of either sex, closely gathered about them, which more generally happens in the colder season of the year. In this pleasing circle, why might not the reading of a fable or two each evening, be proposed as an exercise of amusement, that might advantageously and creditably take place of charades and enigmas, among young persons from sixteen to any later period, for the investigation of their moral scope and intention ?

SECTION II.

Composition of the Fables.

Before he explains the serious application of these apologues, and the different purposes to which he wishes them to be made subservient, he begs leave to premise three words on their technical composition. They are professedly written on the ground-work of Phædrus and La Fontaine, i. e. on the subjects of their fables; subjects conveyed to them through the dry and simple apologues of old Æsop, and to him perhaps from Lokeman and Pilpay.

They are, however, presented in the following pages, sometimes as translations, sometimes as imitations; oftener perhaps as paraphrases, with many new thoughts freely added, and those in the present writer's own manner; not from a fruitless ambition of improving upon such models; but from the desire of giving them some little air of novelty. The volumes of these delightful fabulists have, sometimes, been kept open, after reading the fable he had chosen; sometimes entirely shut again, 'till he had written the

whole. But they were always, one or other, at hand, for reperusal, or recollection.

SECTION III.

Their Title, Object, and Uses.

But to proceed to the purposes for which this publication is intended to serve, and which it may probably do the more successfully, on account of the familiar stile and manner in which the fables are written ; the author has entitled his little work, “ Fables for the Fire-side,” under an idea of recommending them more particularly to parents in middle and higher life, who educate their children at home ; and to others who, at times of school vacation, have the younger members of their families, of either sex, closely gathered about them, which more generally happens in the colder season of the year. In this pleasing circle, why might not the reading of a fable or two each evening, be proposed as an exercise of amusement, that might advantageously and creditably take place of charades and enigmas, among young persons from sixteen to any later period, for the investigation of their moral scope and intention ?

Although the writer, in his title page, has intimated this use of his fables in schools and academies, as well as in private families, he expects it will be first most successfully brought to experiment in the latter, and in those smaller seminaries scarcely less private; where, in fact, the pupils, male or female, make part of the family, and are entertained on the same footing as its younger relatives. But it is hoped, that masters and governesses of the largest seminaries may be among the first, to try the experiment in their private families at their hours of relaxation out of school. Success there may probably soon induce them to adopt this plan of moral and intellectual exercise in the higher classes of the school or academy.

To proceed now to the manner of putting the plan into execution, the writer has placed what he would call his moral cases or praxis at the end of each fable in a series of questions and answers upon each; partly as suggestions to instructors or examiners; whether parents, friends, or preceptors. A fable having been distinctly and properly read by one of the pupils or young persons of a family, the first question is to be deliberately proposed, and, after a due interval allowed for

consideration, let an answer be required from each in order, before the examiner proceeds to a second interrogatory. It must be understood, that to make this exercise as extensively useful as may be, the cases or questions are far from being solely directed to the main intention of the fable ; but are meant also to turn the pupil's investigations and reasonings on the circumstances, incidents, and characters ; and on every point of view, in which an apologue can be placed, to make it subservient to instruction. A mere affirmation or negation will, whatever their object, suffice to answer some of the questions. But the greater part, perhaps, will require, or at least admit, reasons to be given for the affirmation or negation ; and an improving exercise is proposed, and will be practised, as far as our young thinkers are urged to discover and produce them. But a little difficulty has been foreseen in the examiners taking the answers to any question proposed, and that is, by what means to prevent later answerers than the first, where several young persons are considering the same question, from availing themselves partly, or even wholly, of preceding solutions ; for it is almost needless to observe the various aspects under which different minds

may regard the same question. Different, and sometimes even contrary answers, may possibly and even plausibly be returned to the same case where principles directly moral are not implicated. Now it is supposed, that it may not, on many occasions, be thought too formal a thing in these parties, were we to recommend, during the interval allowed for consideration, that each young person, keeping a pencil in his hand, should put down a few leading words expressing the substance of the answer he intended to give. This being read, or shewn to the querist, when required, would sufficiently distinguish and appropriate each solution, however it might resemble any other, previously given. As often as this amusement is resorted to, the examiner, when the case proposed has been duly considered, cannot do better, than to demand answers *first* from the younger members of the party, or those thought less likely to give such as are proper, or most plausible. Their answers will lastly be compared with those of the author.

SECTION IV.

Fables improperly taught to young Children.

As soon, however, as the attention of those, to whom they are addressed, begins to flag under

the praxis just explained, calling, as it does, for some vigour of thought, if not of ingenuity, it may be discontinued; and our young moralists may, in the solution of riddles and charades, unbend their minds with their more juvenile brothers and sisters; who, if below the age, at which these fables are recommended, are certainly too young to give any just moral interpretation of these, or of any other apologies; and, in attempting it, are only wasting their time on what to them is barren of all use. A fable, in which birds and beasts are holding human discourse, to *them* literally becomes no better than a *story about a Cock and a Bull*. The author knows, that a very respectable Baronet, who has lately appeared in the character of a fabulist for young children, has naturally enough been induced, to treat with censure Rousseau's Analysis of Fontaine's Fable of the "Fox and the Crow." But, notwithstanding the impracticable paradoxes and eccentricity of Rousseau's system of education, he has surely discovered much discernment of the faculties of the infant mind; and, notwithstanding a mistake or two in this Analysis, has given no insufficient proof of the general incapacity of young children to understand the moral application of

fables. It will be said, that moral applications are attached to many of our books of fables by their editors ; where the fabulist's meaning has not been clear ; or, that in default of this assistance, teachers have explained the moral, *vivâ voce*, to the pupil. Instances, it is true, of these helps are not unfrequently supplied ; but it is *as* true, that children are as often left without them. But, in the former case, the applications are scarcely ever *voluntarily* read by children ; in the latter, the living instruction is too rarely given them more than once, and is soon forgotten ; if, indeed, in either case, it be ever well understood. Though many young children will spontaneously peruse their fables again and again, it is only because they are amused with the story ; as they have often been heard to confess at a riper age. But whenever, in the perusal of fables, not to mention their repetitions of them as a task, they are left solely to their own reflection to interpret their meaning, or construe their tendency, immature judgments, like theirs, will be so often misled, unless where general principles of morals have been previously and deeply inculcated by the most direct and simple precepts, that their early introduction to fables may be attended with ill consequence

or danger. Suppose a child, either naturally more inclined to evil than to good (as some have believed all children to be), or already corrupted, in many of his ideas of right and wrong, by idle and vicious school-fellows, by ignorant servants, or ill examples of parents, or of other members of a family at home, will he not be likely to make some bad character in the fable rather the object of his imitation, than the good ones? It cannot be denied, that he has before him, in some characters of every fable, a lesson of evil. He is taught by them the way and manner, in which bad things may be done; how the worst crimes may be committed; and that too with success; as we find by the defective management of some of our fabulists, that vice is almost as often rewarded, or at least encouraged, as virtue. To mention but one instance, where the author would undertake to produce many, the fable of the "Cat, the Eagle, and the Sow," shews the malicious and selfish conduct of the Cat completely gaining her point, and exhibits vice triumphant. That this happens continually in the world is true; but it should be concealed from children, 'till clear moral ideas have been well imbibed and confirmed. It is time enough for youth to

be made acquainted with the frequent success and prosperity of wicked men in the world, a little before their entrance into it, and after they have been seriously taught, what the supreme governor of the universe expects, with his own assistance, from the free agency of man in this state of probation under the great doctrine of a future retribution, through which all that confusion, occasioned in our present existence by triumphant vice, will be rectified; the moral attributes of God vindicated; and wisdom justified of her children. When right principles have been, by direct instruction, sufficiently fixed to have an habitual influence on the sentiments and conduct of children; they may, between sixteen and twenty years of age, and sometimes earlier, according to their different parts and progress, be capable of reading fables with discrimination and judgment; their perusal of them may be attended with as much instruction as entertainment; and prove a mode of preparation for their entrance on the stage of the world, equally safe, useful, and agreeable.

Fables, both in ancient and modern times, have, probably with more tenderness and delicacy than good moral effect, been employed as

a vehicle of instruction to young princes, and to the children of great men, by preceptors too obsequious, or too gentle. But kings, and persons of high rank, who wish their heirs and successors to maintain the dignity of exalted station, rather by virtuous and useful, than by brilliant and imposing actions, will not entrust the education of their offspring to instructors, who want courage and address to imprint on the minds of their illustrious pupils, from the earliest period of their education, at once a reverence for truth, and the most direct and simple maxims of morality.

Where these momentous objects are to be first insinuated through the circuitous and timid medium of fable, it seems impossible, that a pupil of ordinary penetration should not soon discover, that his teacher is afraid of surprizing, or alarming him, by a more direct and natural method; nor is it unlikely, he should be led, after some time, to doubt his instructor's earnestness or sincerity; and thence to question the necessity of learning that, which there has been any fear or hesitation of directly inculcating.

This would be no unnatural process of the

mind. If this way of instilling the first moral lessons appear exceptionable in the very case, to which it seemed originally best adapted ; why should it be so indiscriminately used in other situations, where so little appearance of necessity or propriety can be pleaded for it ? It should seem then a fair conclusion, that the use of fables would, in every institution of childhood and youth, be best deferred 'till a certain maturity of judgment permits it without danger.

Every one knows the wise and excellent purposes to which fables have been, and may be applied, in addressing the passions and prejudices of sovereigns, and other men in the actual possession of power ; or large assemblies of the people in times of commotion or tumult ; in order to correct flagrant abuses of authority, or prevent public violence ; as in the case of Nathan's apologue to the king of Israel ; that of Menenius Agrippa to the people of Rome, and of our Saviour's parables to the Rulers, Rabbis, and the people of the Jews. Circumstances like these, probably enough, gave rise to the invention of fables : but as they could have wrought no effect unless understood by those to whom they were addressed, it

seems preposterous to have used them indiscriminately as means of moral instruction to young children ; by whom their main purpose is rarely comprehended.

SECTION V.

Themes first to be composed on Fables.

There is another purpose of too much advantage to be overlooked, which these fables, through the questions raised upon them, are calculated to answer. Although, even among well-educated parents, it is not every one who may be found able to make all the use of this book, which it is designed to answer, none will find it difficult to instruct the family pupil of proper age, how much these questions will facilitate, at its commencement, that useful exercise, the composition of themes. Can this be begun upon a better plan than that of writing moral applications to fables, with such hints and suggestions of topics, as these questions will be found to exhibit ? Will not this be a much easier method than setting out at once on some single moral sentiment or adage, usually given for the subject of a theme ? This intimation of topics in the form of questions, sets the mind to

work, as has been observed above, for answers ; and thence for the investigation of matter to expand them.

SECTION VI.

Another use of the Questions.

Questions in this way, may also be considered, as so many cases, or different points of view, however nearly connected, in which the same fable, or indeed moral subjects in general, may be regarded. They may sow the seeds of casuistry in the juvenile thinker's mind, and make him aware, what errors may arise from premature decision. Much as some persons may admire a decisive turn of mind, and fancy it a mark of energy and perhaps of ability, it ought, during a course of education, to be very jealously watched by preceptors, as much more likely, in future life, to lead to error than to truth. It may dispatch business ; but it will often fly in the face of justice. A hesitating mind in youth is much more likely to become a logical and philosophical one, than a mind naturally precipitate and decisive : it waits for, and weighs the sober results of investigation and experiment. It has been related as an anecdote of a great

lawyer, who formerly presided in one of the Courts of Westminster Hall, that it had become a maxim with him, in the decision of causes on the bench, that, "*the first object was dispatch, and then justice.*" Such a maxim as this, whether in law, or in the economy of common life, may impose upon the superficial under the appearance of quick discernment, or of the intuition of genius; but it is dangerous in proportion to its plausibility. Respecting the administration of justice, it luckily, however, presents no prepossessing description of professional principle, or of solid ability. But, as far as it were adopted, it should appear a much worse extreme than the famous delay of the law; so much, on the opposite side, a more common subject of complaint. In countries, where the ministers of justice are proverbially corrupt, this maxim might be a short way for a lawyer to make his fortune, and it would often be found the very shortest for his client to lose one.

SECTION VII.

Manner and stile of the Fables, conducive to natural reading.

But the writer proceeds now to the last useful purpose, which he has particularly intended his

own fables to answer—and that is, *the art of reading naturally*. Nothing is more true, than that, where ill methods of education, bad examples, or other causes have misguided nature in any respect, to do a thing *naturally* afterwards, strange as it may seem, then becomes *an art*; and sometimes a very difficult one to learn. The strange tones, into which children are so idly, and in schools of a lower order, so generally suffered to fall, may justly be reckoned among the most unnatural of all human noises, the London cries hardly excepted. To remedy corruption in so important an article, as far as a stile and manner of writing can be made subservient to this end, with the assistance and direction of parents and preceptors in their sons and daughters reading of these fables, has been a wish anxiously felt throughout the composition of them. With this view, they are written in the familiar and idiomatic language of conversation; and the better to consult the easy stile of narration, the periods are generally constructed with as few inversions as possible in poetic writing; and, for the same reason, the utmost freedom has been used in the variety of the measures, and the placing of the rhymes. The writer never recollects, without a feeling of disgust, the

monotonous and tiresome effects he has often experienced in hearing ill-taught children repeat the fables of *Gay*. The same kind of chaunt, unvaried modulation, and cadence of voice, returning every two lines through the same rhymed couplet of four feet, without change, or hope of change, from the beginning to the end of the fable, is a wearisome exercise of patience to a tolerably educated ear, taught to listen to the voice of nature; and is, at the same time, as bad a manner of reading, or of reciting, as can well be imagined. It has therefore been the writer's object, in these fables, to consult all practicable variety in the several respects mentioned; so that young people, *in reading them frequently aloud*, cannot easily desert those tones, modulations, accents, and cadences, which nature always gives the voice in conversation; or they will scarcely fail to recover them, if lost under injudicious or vulgar tuition. At worst; any sensible well-educated parent may avail himself of these pleasant opportunities of fire-side reading, to become their tutor, under the guidance of Nature. She will never be interrogated on the subject of her own true tones, &c. in the speaking, and consequently the reading of any passage whatever;

without returning a right answer. In this exercise will always be one of the best schools for the true art of reading. Nature is not easily banished from the family fire-side, however in this matter she may appear exiled from some of our seminaries of education.

SECTION VIII.

This topic pursued, from the reading of Fables to that of other forms of versification.

In order to carry this article of juvenile improvement to its due extent, that is, to reading, with propriety, every species of poetic numbers, might it not be an advisable exercise, after due practice in the reading, or recitation of fables, in varied measure, if young persons were to proceed next to the reading of blank verse; which would be found much easier to be read, or recited *naturally*, than the rhymed couplet of Dryden, Pope, Young, or Hayley, &c. Although this introduction to the following fables does not lead the writer necessarily beyond the uses, to which he has wished *them* to be applied, he will perhaps be excused for yielding to the temptation, he feels, of naming a few of our poets, in the order which he conceives some of their works well calculated for forming or

improving, that very pleasant and useful member of domestic society, the fire-side reader.

Were he then next to proceed to the exercise of reading blank verse, it may be questioned, whether any thing could be selected for his commencement in preference to the "Splendid Shilling," of Philips. This might be succeeded by his poem on "Cyder," and that by Cowper's Task, Mason's Garden, Akenside's Pleasures of the Imagination; whence Cumberland's Calvary, much of it in the true spirit of Milton, would lead him to the "Paradise Lost."

Now to read poems of this varied structure, including those of the tragic drama, naturally and unaffectedly, it must be understood, that, with a much slower and more deliberate manner than would be proper for fables and familiar tales in verse, and with a suitable elevation in the pitch, and due solemnity in the tone of the voice, *the very same modulations as in our ordinary discourse, only more sustained on account of the length of the periods,* must accompany the whole process; and precisely the same emphasis and cadence, pauses and stops, as in conversation.

The reading of our tragic dramas, with a due attention to nature in the foregoing particulars, without the school-boy's puling whine, or that pompous mouthing of young actors, which answers their theatric strut outraged in treading the stage, will be found to require much resolute practice, and patient recollection under the guidance of good sense, and the delicate taste acquired by liberal education. The elegant translations we possess of the Greek tragedians by Franklin, Potter, and Woodhull;—Mason's *Elfrida* and *Caractacus*, as chaste models of classic taste, and of varied and flowing versification, may be safely proposed in this department of reading or recitation. These may be followed by selections from the family Shakespear; for *selected* the pieces must be, that nothing may excite the blush of ingenuous youth. What parent, in his senses, will not join with the writer in the reprobation of reading, of whatever kind, that can only be admitted at the expence of religion and good manners?

As some practice will already have taken place through the chorusses of the Greek drama, &c. in the difficult task of reading lyric poetry, which may properly succeed blank verse, it

will suffice to mention Pomfret's Sacred Pindarics, equally pious and sublime; Akenside's Ode to Lord Huntingdon; Collins's Ode on the Passions; the two great Odes of Gray; and Mason's Fall of Babylon, &c. The Alexander's Feast of Dryden could not, without offence to the critics, want recommendation here, were there not a line or two in it, presenting images by no means unexceptionable.

As it does not seem necessary to distinguish the stanza of Spenser from lyric numbers, this praxis for the proper reading of poetry may now conclude with authors, not uncommonly *first* taken up for this purpose; those we mean, who have chiefly written in the heroic or rhymed couplet of ten syllables, as Dryden, Pope, Young, Goldsmith, Hayley, &c. To spare the trouble of selection from Dryden, first mentioned, in order to avoid the licentious and immoral, what could we better put into the young reader's hands, at the family fire-side, than his translation of the *Æneid*? Pope's Homer should obviously come next. The name of Young suggests his "Fame, the Universal Passion;" and that of Goldsmith his "Traveller" and "Deserted Village." Selections from the

rest may be left to that moral taste and sentiment, which, in well-educated families, ought to be supposed the Christian Lar, or tutelary genius of the chimney-corner.

It will have been understood, that poems in the rhymed couplet have been placed last in these suggestions, as being less likely to be read without deviation *from the true tones of nature*, than any species of a more varied metre ; the latter admitting a less regular disposition of rhymes, a more flowing rhythm, and, in general, longer periods. The rock on which ordinary or ill-taught readers split, in the recital of our equipoised couplet, is that of repeating the same cadence at the end of every second line, which produces a wearisome and soporiferous effect. This can be prevented by nothing but a resolute attention to the sense of each period, whenever suspended (as it ought to be, as often as possible), beyond the close of the second line, by a strict observance of the single or the double pause, as one or both occur in every verse ; and by a due knowledge and nice practice of the laws of punctuation. For what regards accent and emphasis, in the latter of which nature is our sole instructress, we cannot better lengthen

this introduction than with a judicious and luminous passage from Sheridan's Art of Reading.

* “ ‘ Emphasis, discharges in sentences, the
‘ same kind of office, that accent does in words.
‘ As accent is the link which ties syllables
‘ together, and forms them into words ; so
‘ emphasis unites words together, and forms
‘ them into sentences, or members of sentences:
‘ As accent dignifies the syllable on which it
‘ is laid, and makes it more distinguished by
‘ the ear than the rest ; so emphasis ennobles
‘ the word to which it belongs, and presents
‘ it in a stronger light to the understanding.
‘ Accent is the mark which distinguishes words
‘ from each other, as simple types of our ideas;
‘ without reference to the mutual relation in
‘ which they stand to each other. Emphasis
‘ is the mark, which points out their several
‘ degrees of relationship, in their various
‘ combinations, and the rank which they hold
‘ in the mind. Were there no accents, words
‘ would be resolved into their original syllables:
‘ were there no emphasis, sentences would be
‘ resolved into their original words ; and, in

‘ this case, the hearer must be at the pains
‘ himself, first, of making out the words, and
‘ afterwards their meaning. Whereas, by the
‘ use of accent and emphasis, words, and their
‘ meaning, being pointed out by certain marks,
‘ at the same time they are uttered, the hearer
‘ has all trouble saved, but that of listening ;
‘ and can accompany the speaker at the same
‘ pace that he goes, with as clear a compre-
‘ hension of the matter offered to his consi-
‘ deration, as the speaker himself has, if he
‘ delivers himself well.’

“ From this account it might appear, that emphasis is only a more forcible accent than ordinary laid upon the word to which it belongs, and that it is exactly of the same nature, differing only in degree of force ; an opinion, which, to the great prejudice of elocution, has too generally prevailed. But there is an absolute and constitutional difference, between accent and emphasis, as certainly there ought to be, which consists in this ; that every emphatic syllable, besides a greater stress, is marked also by a change of note in the voice. To shew the necessity of this, we need only observe, that the mind, in communicating its ideas, is in a con-

tinual state of activity, emotion, or agitation, from the different effects which those ideas produce on the mind of the speaker. Now, as the end of such communication is not merely to lay open the ideas, but also all the different feelings which they excite in him who utters them, there must be some other marks beside words, to manifest these ; as words uttered in a monotonous state, can only represent a similar state of mind, perfectly free from all activity or emotion. As the communication of these internal feelings was a matter of much more consequence in our social intercourse, than the mere conveying of ideas ; so the author of our being did not leave the invention of this language, as in the other case, to man, but stamped it himself upon our nature, in the same manner as he has done with regard to the rest of the animal world, who all express their various feelings, by various tones. Only our's, from the superior rank that we hold, is infinitely more comprehensive ; as there is not an act of the mind, an exertion of the fancy, or an emotion of the heart, which have not their peculiar tone, or note of the voice, by which they are to be expressed, all suited in the exactest proportion, to the several degrees of internal feeling."

SECTION IX.

Hints on the natural reading of Prose.

This admirable passage might have closed our introduction; yet as it may be thought strange, that not a word should have been said on the natural reading of prose, except that the passage just cited applies equally to prose and verse, we would briefly notice, that, wherever the correction of unnatural habits in the reading of poetry may have been intended, it has been taken for granted, that persons once made sensible of *them*, could not fail to have examined, whether ill habits might not have affected their prose reading, and that they would doubtless begin a reform in this quarter, where it would most easily be made.

After the directions above recommended, nothing, in adverting to the topic of prose reading, can be necessary but to repeat, in three words, the great, the first, and the last rule, of *attentively comparing the tones, &c. in reading, with those of nature, which we use in conversing, and of constantly recurring to these tones for the correction of any improper habits. To*

facilitate, and ultimately effect the success of this object, the praxis of prose reading should begin with familiar dialogues; and what, in this department, could be more advantageously recommended than Fontenelle's Dialogues of the Dead, whether the original, or the translation, and those of Lord Lyttleton under the same title? Though Bishop Hurd's dialogues are written with truly classic taste, and in the purest stile; and are equally entertaining and instructive; yet being, on account of their subjects, less familiar than the foregoing, they might better follow than precede the reading of a few comedies. For natural stile of dialogue few comedies in our language can be compared with Addison's "Drummer." Of the more modern ones, those, I believe, of Goldsmith and Cumberland, may be read to family parties, without *much*, or perhaps any selection. The elegant dialogues of Hurd may close the praxis of prose reading.

Although the preceding suggestions are confessedly much too far from being sufficiently comprehensive to be offered as formal precepts for those, whose professions and situations in life may oblige them to address large assemblies

in public, it is nevertheless conceived, that to gentlemen educating for the pulpit, the bar, or the senate, they may prove at least useful intimations ; and particularly to such of them as want opportunity, leisure, or convenience, to attend the public lecturers in elocution. It is scarcely doubted, however, that they will suffice for the instruction of those, for whose use they are more directly intended ; young persons of either sex, desirous to acquit themselves, agreeably and with propriety, as readers to small family circles. These valuable contributors to domestic knowledge and amusement, since the education of females at our higher seminaries, and of the daughters of clergymen at home, has taken a larger and more liberal compass than formerly, are become a numerous class in cultivated society : nor do we hesitate to augur, that its moral improvement and happiness will keep pace with their multiplication.

The more thinking part of the world may be disposed to give credit to this plan of domestic improvement, from consideration of the excessive pressure of these times, (this martial age) in numberless families confined to live on fixed, moderate, and often strait incomes, in the middle

rank of British society; into which may be reckoned the great body of the clergy. Does not an indispensable economy reduce a majority of such families to the necessity of living within themselves at home; at least greatly to narrow the circle of their acquaintance? The writer of these pages is free to confess, the former case has, for several years, been the necessary effect of a limited income on himself and his own family. They, having been prevented from stepping, *far, or often, beyond their own threshold* for the enjoyment of society, have found reason to congratulate themselves on the delightful resource of family reading; not seldom, pleasantly varied by the conversation it is naturally calculated to promote.

By persons, not already hackneyed in dissipation, inclined to try the experiment, it might, pretty generally perhaps, be found no uninteresting substitute; a healthy one we are sure it would be—

For midnight suppers, revel, dance, and song,
Play, stare, and press in fashion's giddy throng.

That parents and the elders of families, in some known instances, where the experiment

has been made, should without regret have renounced even the more tranquil pleasures of society for intellectual pleasures at home, ought to be no subject of wonder, though perchance it may ; but that the younger members should after sufficient trial, have declared they felt no diminution of their happiness in the change, has been matter of no unjust triumph.— Whether, however, such had been the result of the experiment or not, there seemed, on account of inauspicious times, no alternative between quiet retirement, books, and reflection, and the senseless resource of those, whose custom it is to borrow of the next year, in order to live extravagantly in this.

But to conclude, if these fables, from their application to the three particular purposes for which they are professedly intended, viz : the exercise of investigation and reasoning,—the facilitating the composition of themes,—and the practice of natural reading,—should become to some perceptible extent, instrumental to the intellectual improvement, and innocent satisfactions of domestic society, though his hopes stretch considerably further, the writer will not lose his reward. And should his bookseller;

from any encouraging demand for this little volume, judge them to have contributed something to the amusement of readers in the world at large, a few more of the writer's early sleepless morning hours may not perhaps be ill employed for the production of another volume.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

FABLE	PAGE
I. The Grasshopper and the Ant	37
II. The Wallet	42
III. The Swallow and small Birds	46
IV. The Philosopher's Cottage	52
V. Æsop at Marbles	57
VI. The Kite and the Pigeons	61
VII. A King for the Frogs	65
VIII. The Fox and the Stork	69
IX. The Oak and the Reed	73
X. The Old Bachelor and his two Mistresses	77
XI. The Women and the Secret	81
XII. The Hornets and the Bees	87
XIII. The Wolf and the Mastiff.	93
XIV. The Cat and the Rats	103
XV. Simonides preserved by the Gods	107
XVI. The Husbandman and Stag	116
XVII. The Two Mules	122
XVIII. The Wolf and the Lamb	126
XIX. The Heifer, the Goat, and the Sheep, in partnership with the Lion	130
XX. The Beau Jackdaw	133
XXI. An Ass too free and easy	137
XXII. The Frog and the Ox	141
XXIII. The Crow, the Fox, and the Rook	146
XXIV. Cæsar's Reward of Officiousness	151

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

FABLE	PAGE
XXV. The Eagle and the Raven.....	157
XXVI. The Cock and the Jewel	162
XXVII. The Lion and Ass a hunting.....	168
XXVIII. The Owl and the Grasshopper	171
XXIX. The Wolf and the Crane	176
XXX. The Sensible Ass	180
XXXI. The Child and the Schoolmaster	183
XXXII. The Ape and the Dolphin	186
XXXIII. The two Dogs	190
XXXIV. The Town and Country Rat	195
XXXV. The Woodman and Death	200
XXXVI. The Lion going to War.....	205
XXXVII. The Rat and the Elephant.....	209
XXXVIII. The Power of Fable	213

FABLES, &c.

FABLE I.

THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE ANT.

A GRASSHOPPER, who sung all summer long,
Found, when November's frosts set in,
No winter stores were gather'd by a song ;
No fly ; no worm ;—what wonder she look'd thin ?
Furnish'd at least with beggar's cant,
Away she hops to neighbour Ant.
“ Famine! she cries, behold me starving!
“ While all, one needs, is yours for carving.
“ Lend me, good soul, a few loose grains, or so,
“ Just till next season ; ('tis at no great distance)
“ I ask but for a mere subsistence :
“ How good my credit is, you know.—
Ere harvest comes, she takes upon her,
At the first moment it is due,
Full payment, on an insect's honour,
Of principal and int'rest too.
The Ant, so cautious of her spending,
Be sure, was never prone to lending :—
“ Tell me, in winter, you that beg, or borrow,

“How is't, the summer season you employ?”—

“In nought but mirth and joy:”

“Both day and night (a fig for sorrow!)—

“I sing, regardless what may hap to-morrow;—

“Nought welcome but time present.”—

“Oh! this, replies the Ant, is mighty pleasant:—

“Thus, leaving all your livelihood to chance,

“You’ve sung most merrily—and now, may
dance.”

QUESTIONS

FOR INVESTIGATING THE MORAL INSTRUCTION
DEDUCIBLE FROM THE FABLE.

1. EXAMINER.—What characters among men are the Grasshopper and the Ant intended by the fabulist to represent?

RESPONDENT.—The former insect, that of an idle, giddy, and thoughtless spendthrift; the latter, a person parsimoniously prudent.

2. Ex.—Is the character of the Ant in all respects to be imitated?

RES.—Not altogether.

3. Ex.—Where is it defective, or worthy of blame?

RES.—In her parsimony.

4. Ex.—Was there any fault in her not lending to the Grasshopper?

RES.—None, I think.

5. Ex.—But might not a person in good circumstances, or well provided with store, like the Ant, lend to a neighbour consistently with prudence?

RES.—Yes, surely.

6. Ex.—Why then should she not have lent to the Grasshopper?

RES.—Because, as lending presupposes the right, and generally, the expectation of being repaid, it would have been incompatible with her prudence to lend, where there was no better security for repayment than the promise of such a prodigal as the Grasshopper.

7. EX.—But should not famine, and the extreme distress of a neighbour, which the Ant did not pretend to doubt, have induced her at least to give something to the relief of her present necessities?

RES.—They ought to have been an irresistible plea.

8. EX.—Why did she not yield to it?

RES.—Because a parsimonious spirit consists ill with charity.

9. EX.—Perhaps the Ant waited to be asked for alms?

RES.—She would have granted nothing to begging.

10. EX.—Does the general and proper definition of charity exclude the idea of parsimony?

RES.—Surely, it does.

11. EX.—But might not that parsimony, by which wealth is saved at least, if not gained, enable a parsimonious character to become a charitable one?

RES.—Undoubtedly: but this is no apology for parsimony. The ability to be charitable, and the disposition to be so, are widely different things.

12. EX.—What is the comparative value of the two characters in the fable, morally considered?

RES.—The Grasshopper is described without any good quality: the Ant, as possessing the virtue of prudence, but accompanied with a vice, as we too often see it in the world, which is apt to confine the benefit of that virtue solely to its possessor.

13. EX.—What then makes the moral of the present fable?

RES.—The disappointment and increased distress, suffered by the Grasshopper from the Ant's refusal to lend, shews the unhappy consequences which generally await an idle, giddy, and thoughtless life; and this was doubtless the intention of the fabulist.

FABLE II.

THE WALLET.

- SAYS Jove, one day, "let every creature
"That breathes, approach the footstool of my throne:
"Whatever limb, or feature
"As ugly, or deform'd, his humour strikes,
"Complexion, fair or brown ;
"Let him but mention his dislikes,
"My remedy shall soon be shewn.
"Hark, Monkey, speak you first ; nor ask me why ;
"Behold these animals all round you ;
"Nor let their various forms, or size confound you :
"Their beauties closely all descry,
"While none at home escape your eye ;
"Then balance yours 'gainst theirs ; all fairly tried ;
"And partiality aside,
"Say, with thyself art fully satisfied ?"—
"Why not ?
"Four legs, like all the rest, I've got :
"And my whole person, tho' I'm far from blind,
"Quite faultless do I find.
"But let friend Bruin there, like something hurl'd,
"Half lick'd, into our nether world,
"Believe me, as I hate to fawn,
"And he'll not sit, to have his picture drawn."

Bruin comes forward : All believed,
His shape and visage to lament ;
But mark (what no one had conceived)
No creature more content !
“ The Elephant, he thought, would much be mended,
“ That shapeless mass, but fit to make one smile,
“ Were his ears crop’d, and tail a bit extended.”
The Elephant, with brains so gifted,
Talk’d just in the same stile.
“ So tall, so proper, o’er the rest so lifted,
“ He in himself saw nothing wrong ;
“ But thought the Whale was monstrously too long.”
The Ant too, all at home just right,
Believ’d herself a giant to the Mite.
Jove now dismiss’d this self-contented crew ;
Reproving each, where due.
But, above all, he found mankind
To their own faults by far most blind ;
Moles to themselves ; but Lynxes to each other :
With the same optics, to themselves so kind,
They ne’er behold a brother.
But so ’t has been, I know not how,
From Father Adam’s time till now ;
In younger times, no less than older,
Each bears a wallet on his shoulder :
In front his neighbours’ faults we find ;
His own, in that snug pocket flung behind.

QUESTIONS,* &c.

1. EXAMINER.—What is it that renders us so strangely blind to our own imperfections?

RESPONDENT.—Self-love.

2. EX.—Why then has it been so deeply implanted in every human breast?

RES.—To carry us forward to every improvement of our nature: without it we should be nothing but imperfection. Had we no value for ourselves, we should neglect every thing but the indulgence of our passions, which could not fail to produce the utmost mental deformity.

3. EX.—Why do we discern our neighbours' faults so much more clearly than our own?

RES.—Because our love for others (those nearest us excepted) seldom prevents us from turning upon *them* a much more attentive and impartial eye.

4. EX.—Whence is it, that we are apt to feel too much satisfaction in discovering the failings of others?

* N.B. That the title of *Questions, &c.* here and throughout the following pages, imports their being all intended for the purpose of investigating moral instruction, whether direct or collateral, from a preceding fable.

RES.—Because we flatter ourselves, they are greater than our own ; whereas the sight of our own foibles, without this comparison, gives us pain.

5. EX.—But is not this a salutary pain ?

RES.—Without doubt, it is.

6. EX.—But why so ?

RES.—Because we are moved by its impression, to become better acquainted with ourselves.

7. EX.—Since, of all knowledge, that of ourselves is the most desirable, is not self-love, which often stands so much in our way of acquiring it, and which yet you have affirmed to be so useful in carrying us on to excellence, a passion which makes man inconsistent with himself in its producing such contrary effects ?

RES.—Yes ; it does, like all other passions, whenever applied to a wrong object, or exceeding their due measure.

8. EX.—You are undoubtedly speaking here of such passions only, as may be gratified under due regulations of religion and morality ; but are there not passions, of which our nature seems to have been made susceptible, for the merit only of being opposed and subdued, as a test of our virtue ?

RES.—Yes ; the malignant passions ; as malice, envy, hatred of our species, and those marked for abhorrence—the unnatural and monstrous.

FABLE III.

THE SWALLOW AND SMALL BIRDS.

THE travell'd spark, had done as well
Ne'er to have left retirement's humble cell,
As come, no wiser than his neighbours, home.

A Swallow, given much to roam,
Great knowledge, who had gain'd by sea and land,
The fruit of wide experience had at hand.

She was so mighty weather-wise,
No change in th' elements could rise,
Which she had not foreseen.

Her wits so active and 'so keen
She spared, on no occasion, showing.
It happen'd, at the season of hemp sowing,
She saw a peasant flinging seed,
To furrow after furrow, without end.

With the kind warning of a friend,
She bade the little birds take heed ;
And told 'em, with a doleful length of face,
She felt a sad foreboding of their case.
For her own part, to foreign climes no stranger,
She could set off, and 'scape the danger.

" Ye little folks ! she cries, that live at home,
" Come hither, for a moment, come ;

- “ Observe, that busy hand there strewing
“ What some unlucky day, alas ! too near,
“ May prove, my friends, your utter ruin.
“ Ah ! what a crop (I shake with fear)
“ Of nets, gins, snares, foresee I springing,
“ Where’er that wretch his seed is flinging !
“ Beware, for if ye heed me not ;
“ Imprisonment, or death, is sure your lot !
“ Go then, nor be my counsel vain ;
“ Peck up, and swallow every grain.”

What did this graceless crew but laugh ?

Exclaiming : “ Too much trouble this by half ! ”

Soon now each grain of hemp was seen,
Shot above ground, and all was green.

Our prophetess, although unheeded,
Still gave the good advice they needed.

“ Haste, haste, and pluck up blade by blade,

“ The produce of that cursed grain ;

“ Or trust me, your destruction’s plain.”

Hear, how they flout at all she said :

“ Hence, idle fortune-teller,” all exclaim,

“ A pretty business this, old dame !

“ To execute your sage commands,

“ Would want at least a thousand hands.”

The hemp, behold, now getting nearly ripe,

The Swallow opens once again :—

“ Comes crop too soon from evil grain !

“ Though to deaf ears, thus far, I vainly pipe,
“ Yet three words more, and I have done.
“ When mow’d the crop, and harvest carried in,
“ You find hostilities begun ;
“ And wrought at length, the net, the snare, the gin,
“ Cease thus, my little friends, to fly about ;
“ Keep safe conceal’d, and ne’er stir out.
“ The Crane, Duck, Woodcock, have resource :
“ A jaunt with me, to distant climes,
“ These all can take, in dang’rous times :
“ Yours must be quite a different course.
“ While we o’er seas and desarts wing our way,
“ Whether to Greenland, or to Africa ;
“ You have no place for safety left,
“ But some snug hole, which chance has cleft
“ In a lone rock, or castle wall :
“ There’s your sole refuge, trust me, one and all.”—
Our small birds treat the Swallow’s lecture,
As idle chatter ; mere conjecture.
Like Homer’s Trojans in the days of yore,
Some yawn’d, when poor Cassandra prophecied ;
Some giggled ; others said, she lied ;
None wished to hear her more.
But mark the consequence : alike they’re taken ;
Nor bird, nor Trojan sav’d his bacon.
We listen to our instincts ; (they speak home)
Mindless of ills foretold us, till they come.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Why were the small birds so indisposed to listen to the Swallow's good advice?

RESPONDENT.—From that ignorance, which naturally accompanies inexperience.

2. EX.—But does not the world abound in pretenders to prophecy, whose predictions never come to pass?

RES.—It does.

3. EX.—Were not the small birds then exculpated for their want of confidence?

RES.—Certainly not, unless they had examined, which they did not, the ground of the Swallow's pretensions.

4. EX.—Did the Swallow afford them sufficient grounds, on which to have judged more candidly?

RES.—Certainly she did; or else the fable would have conveyed no moral.

5. EX.—What were they, as indicated by the fable?

RES.—First, her information, that one of the common uses of hemp was, to make nets, gins, and snares, on purpose to entrap small birds; and secondly, because having explained to them, how easily she herself could avoid them, she proved

her warning to have had no view but to their safety : she was therefore quite disinterested.

6. Ex.—Since gipseys, soothsayers, and astrologers, have always abused the credulity of mankind, are there no means of divining future events ?

Res.—No certain ones, but the inspirations of heaven.

7. Ex.—How are we to distinguish such predictions as those of the Swallow from what is properly called prophecy ?

Res.—The Swallow's foresight consisted in nothing but foreseeing the common effects of natural causes ; the gift of prophecy is supernatural.

8. Ex.—What classes of men are supposed to possess the greatest share of the Swallow's foresight ?

Res.—In the first place, those profound observers of the passions, characters, and conduct of men, who, understanding the motives from which they most commonly act, can foretel how they will probably act under any given circumstances, at any future time : in the second place, those observers and experimentalists, conversant with the general phenomena of the animal, vegetable, and mineral worlds, who are able to trace effects to their causes, and vice versâ ; and thus to invent, improve, and bring to perfection, all those arts

and sciences, by which these kingdoms of nature are brought under the dominion of man, and thus made subservient to his benefit, convenience, and happiness.

9. Ex.—To what characters are these two classes properly entitled?

Res.—The former, to that of moral, the latter, to that of natural, philosophers.

FABLE IV.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S COTTAGE.

THE name of friendship is a common sound ;
But tell me, where the thing itself is found ?

Philosophers, as we are told,
Eat, drink, and sleep like other men,
And, like them, burn with heat, and quake with cold;
So that, the shallowest wit may ken
Why Socrates might want to build a house.

A house he built ; but 'twas so small,
The connoisseurs, who passed, said, one and all,
“ This a mansion for a mouse.”

Your gentry, who had proverbs pat,
Cried : “ Here is not room to swing a cat.”
The wise man, hearing this remark,
Observed, nor was his meaning dark,
“ My cot will answer all my ends,
“ Happy were I, to fill it but with friends.”

QUESTIONS, &c.

1.—EXAMINER.—Why is true friendship, one of the most desirable things in the world, so rarely found ?

RESPONDENT.—Because different persons, of minds, tempers, tastes, principles, and general cast of character, all nearly resembling each other, are seldom brought together for any sufficient length of time, to form such a connection, as deserves the name of friendship.

2. Ex.—But cannot a true friendship subsist without these near resemblances ?

RES.—It is, I believe, generally thought, that it cannot according to the definition of a perfect friendship.

3. Ex.—How then would you define a perfect friendship ?

RES.—Most of the terms are in my answer to the first question : Repeating them, I would say, that a perfect friendship is the union of minds, tempers, tastes, principles, and general cast of character, all so much alike in two different persons, as to dispose each to the other's interest with unalterable fidelity. Each will moreover regard, and consult the other's happiness at all times,

equally with, and, oftentimes, much more than his own.

4. Ex.—Is not this notion of friendship so exalted, as that, in some very particular circumstance, one might be conceived to sacrifice his life for the other ?

Res.—I think that might be expected from it.

5. Ex.—But is not this then, a romantic notion, and almost absolutely impracticable ?

Res.—The Christian moralists ought not to regard it as absolutely impracticable; for an apostle has said, that, though “ scarcely for a righteous man (i. e. a just one) will one die; yet, peradventure for a good man” (i. e. one not only righteous, nor only religious, but uniting in himself moreover all the exalted qualities of this apostle’s charity,) “ some would even dare to die”—(Rom. 5.7.) Now such persons might be supposed to reach the idea of friendship, which our Saviour expressed in saying, “ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”—(John 15. 13.)

6. Ex.—Allow me to propose a question here on these words of our Lord, though remote from any thing suggested by the fable: Ought we not to infer from them, since no man could have greater

love than to die for his friends, that he who, while declaring this, knew he should, shortly afterwards, lay down his life, not only for his friends, but for his greatest enemies, must have been much more than man ?

RES.—He must surely have expected, that when he should have not only done this, but have risen again for their justification, it would altogether be admitted, among many others, a cogent proof of his divinity.

7. Ex.—But, to return, and that pointedly, to the main scope of the fable ; do you conceive, that Socrates meant more by friendship than the notion ordinarily attached to that connection by the thinking part of the world ?

RES.—He probably meant nothing farther.

8. Ex.—How then would you state that notion of friendship ?

RES.—To be a social connection subsisting between virtuous persons, in which one party may, on all occasions, depend on the sincerity, candour, and fidelity of the other ; on a participation of his joys and sorrows ; and on a readiness, occasionally, to assist the wants of his friend, to his own inconvenience.

9. Ex.—For such a connection, you don't seem to think the same similarity of disposition,

character, &c.; requisite, as in your definition of friendship above?

RES.—No: provided, that both parties are virtuous, there may be considerable dissimilarity in other respects.

10. Ex.—And could Socrates think friends, answering your latter description, not easy to be met with?

RES.—He certainly appears to have thought a small house would contain a greater number of them than most men are likely to find.

FABLE V.

ÆSOP AT MARBLES.

SUPPOSE it Christmas, boys and girls from school,
Smiling and joyous round your snug fire-side ;
Were then my fable on their judgments tried,
They'd each exclaim ; “ I'm sure he was no fool,
“ Altho', you grave ones, should outvote it,
“ No fool, I'm sure, the man, who wrote it.
“ His moral, tho' to us not always clear,
“ We know, we can't mistake it here.”

When a philosopher of Athens saw
Old Æsop in the school-boy's ring,
Intent upon a game at taw,
At first he wonder'd at so new a thing.
His wonder, ending in a laugh,
He call'd the fabulist a calf.
Our wit observing this effect,
And never in retorting slow,
Ask'd his companions for a bow.
Now posing it unbent, with arch respect,
Quoth he, “ most easily, no doubt,
“ Friend Greybeard, thou canst find this riddle
out ;”
The crowd ran gaping round the solemn stranger ;
Puzzled, he knits his brow, foreseeing danger,

Lest, if unable to resolve th' enigma,
His wisdom should incur a stigma.
But ah ! his utmost stretch of wit
No plausible solution hit.

“ Know then, says *Æsop*, since compell'd to yield,
“ You seem withdrawing from the field,
“ Continued tension quickly breaks the bow,
“ Which, sometimes slacken'd, long its pow'rs
may know.
“ The sports of youth affect not to despise :
“ And pause awhile from letters, to be wise.”

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Is this apologue meant solely to recommend relaxation from study in the case of young persons ?

RESPONDENT.—Probably not ; but, if in Æsop's time this advice were much needed, under our own rational systems of scholastic discipline it certainly is not. No young persons, at our schools, intent upon their own improvement, can complain, that vacant time enough is not allowed them ; however delighted with the fabulist's method of recommending it.

2. Ex.—By old Æsop's mingling in the amusements of school-boys, may not a much more general application of this fable have been intended ?

RES.—It was more probably meant to shew, that too intense employment of the mind is hurtful at all ages and in all pursuits.

3. Ex.—But does not the hurt, or the danger, seem most to arise from an intense application too long continued on the *same* object ?

RES.—That, I believe, is the point, on which most stress is to be laid.

4. Ex.—What is your reason for believing so ?

RES.—That several of our amusements, as the

games of chess, whist, and perhaps billiards, while they require more action of mind than of body, are often only resorted to for the sake of change, or to relieve the mind from some other study or pursuit, which perhaps had scarcely demanded severer attention.

5. Ex.—How do you explain—“ And pause awhile from letters, to be wise,”*—the concluding line of the fable?

RES.—All our reading and different studies should be allowed some time to rest in the mind, that, like seed sown in the ground, they may have their proper developement and growth, under the various processes of reflection, reasoning, actual observation, experience, &c. ; and be thus brought to maturity in the fruit of real knowledge and wisdom. People may otherwise be reading throughout their whole lives, and know nothing.

* A line from Dr. Johnson's imitation of one of the Satires of Persius.

FABLE VI.

THE KITE AND THE PIGEONS.

HE who commits his interests to a knave,
Too free in offers of assistance,
May find he meant but to enslave,
And wish such kindness at a distance.
The Pigeons fearful of rapacious might,
Escaped the clutches of the Kite,
By the rapidity of wing
With which they 're form'd to spring.
The ravisher, despairing of success,
Thro' force of arms,
Attempts to conquer their alarms
By cunning and address.
Then grieving for their weak condition,
Lures them to listen to a proposition ;
“ What pity ! that a people so defenceless
“ Should want a sovereign's protection :
“ Methinks, 't were far from weak or senseless,
“ To try th' advantage of subjection.”
Little suspecting all he meant,
The Pigeons easily consent :
The Kite, in form elected king,
As if t' afford immediate defence,
Chuses the dovecoat for his residence.

The palace soon begins to ring
With cries of bloodshed and assassination.
Regardless of his subjects weal, or right,
Or his own oath at coronation,
Nought made the tyrant's business, or delight,
But murd'rous gripes, and devastation.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—In what former age have more extensive, or more fatal effects arisen from the cajolery of a tyrant, or has the conduct of the Kite been more eminently displayed, than in the present?

RESPONDENT.—History, either ancient or modern, affords perhaps no parallel instance.

2. EX.—To what can be attributed his wonderful fortune in finding such numerous flocks of Pigeons?

RES.—No causes more probable, can be assigned, than the opportunities opened to him in the revolution of France, and that degeneracy of spirit in the states of Europe, arising, in some, from the corruption of too much wealth and prosperity; in others, from envy and competition, and all producing national disquiet, commotion, or unceasing war. These, altogether, have banished that political confidence indispensable to any firm alliance, or confederacy of nations between each other, which alone would have enabled them to resist the designs and projects of so insidious, and so victorious a tyrant.

3. EX.—Is there nothing to be found in private

life analogous to the cruel tyranny of the Kite, and the folly of the Pigeons ?

RES.—Yes ; and our suspicions may justly be awakened, whenever friendship, protection, or other great advantages are offered us by those, from whom we have no reason to expect them, and who, we know, have abused the trust and confidence of others. Something insidious generally follows, and persons, expecting some signal favour, become the pigeons of the fable.

FABLE VII.

A KING FOR THE FROGS.*

THE Frogs as free,
And happy too, as frogs need wish to be,
Hopp'd where they pleas'd about their lake ;
Not frogs in France knew more equality :
And yet they grumbled (sure, for grumbling sake)
Because they wanted, (could you guess the thing ?)
Forsooth ! the honour of a king.
At length they form'd a congregation,
And croak'd to Jupiter in supplication.
He smiles, and all the gods around him stare,
To hear so whimsical prayer.
Yet Jove unwilling to deny 'em,
Or meaning possibly to try 'em,
Let down, into their echoing bog,
His wooden majesty—king log.
The sound and splashing drove 'em, helter skelter,
At their wits' ends, to seek for shelter.
Calmness and quiet soon succeeding,
Courage returns : the Frogs resort
About his majesty, to pay their court.

* This Fable was written some years since ; the subject not being inapplicable to certain results of the French revolution.

But he, their loyalty not heeding,
They shortly slacken'd in their breeding :
Nor had he long within their state resided,
Before his tameness was derided ;
At length these graceless subjects, growing bolder,
Play'd e'en at leap-frog o'er his royal shoulder !
Tired of a governor so humble,
They soon began again to grumble,
And begg'd of Jupiter another king,
Who to their state might some advantage bring ;
And be a little more—the thing.

Yes : says the god,
“ A king I'll send ; and you shall feel his power.”
His word was sanctioned by an angry nod.

Comes a voracious Stork ; an hour
Sufficed him half the nation to devour.

In deep affliction and dismay
Some emigrants, that timely stole away,
Got Mercury to intercede,
To save at least a remnant of the breed.

But Jupiter, on no condition,
Would grant th' ambassador's petition.

“ I have no pity for the case

“ Of such a senseless, croaking race :

“ The king was good enough, I sent 'em first,

“ Be now their murmurs with a tyrant curst.”

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Were not these Frogs more infatuated than the Pigeons in the foregoing fable?

RESPONDENT.—This, I think, must be allowed; inasmuch as, while there appeared not more, or rather no cause, for discontent, they were not cajoled and tempted like the Pigeons, to think their present state could be mended.

2. Ex.—But does not their folly appear much greater than that of the Pigeons for two farther reasons?

RES.—You mean, I suppose, because they not only supplicated for a change, from the mere humour of changing, where nothing interfered with their happiness; but also, when the desired change was granted them, which had no way disturbed it after a moment's surprize, they still continued to murmur and petition for another king.

3. Ex.—To give our fable a more general application, I would ask, on what occasions mankind seem most unreasonable in their dispositions and conduct?

RES.—They never, perhaps, shew themselves less influenced by reason, the noble prerogative

they boast above frogs, and all the animal fraternity, than in groundless discontent and murmuring; and in their endeavours to alter their condition without any just cause for complaint.

FABLE VIII.

THE FOX AND THE STORK.

'Tis said, (perhaps the thing was rumour,) 1
That Reynard, in a waggish humour, 2
One, at most games, who comes off winner, 3
Invited Gran'am Stork to dinner. 4
In the Stork's eye, it look'd but comical, 5
That Reynard, much too economical, 6
Had got no pudding, flesh, nor even fish, 7
Tho', 'mong your Storks, a fav'rite dish. 8
To see at table a low shallow platter, 9
For a soup meagre, Reynard's only fare, 10
Instead of a tureen, she well might stare ! 11
But, soon enough, she understands the matter ; 12
For while she only wets her bill, 13
Which, in a bason, or tureen, 14
An admirable spoon had been, 15
And only baulks her appetite's good will ; 16
Her host, arch Reynard, every sup, 17
Had lap'd his porridge fairly up. 18
The Stork upon occasion could be sly ; 19
And thinking, she had reason why, 20
Requests the Fox's company. 21
She begs to set before him 22
A long-neck jar of glass, with fricasee ; 23
Such, as if faint, would soon restore him. 24

The Fox, beholding all within,
Felt his mouth water to begin,
But knew not how—
Then, with complacent brow,
“ This is my method, said the Stork ;
“ (For I want neither knife nor fork ;)”
So thrusting down the jar, her beck,
And after it a mile of neck,
She help’d herself at pleasure ;
And, to the Fox’s thinking, above measure.
For while he sat, a mere spectator,
His time of dinner growing later,
The Stork, not wishing to be beaten,
By Reynard’s treat, had fairly eaten
Each morsel in the jar ;
And saw herself, with Reynard, on a par.
He, recollecting his own trick,
No quarrel with the Stork could pick.
His self-applause was growing coolish,
Against his head his stomach grumbled :
Poor Reynard, mortified and humbled,
Sneak’d off ; and looking rather foolish,
“ ’Tis true, he cries, I’ve lost my bacon ;
“ But he, who gives a joke, must learn to take one.”

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Are such jokes as this of the Fox allowable in the common intercourse of men with each other ?

RESPONDENT.—Having much more of the character of fun and waggy than that of wit or pleasant humour, they are certainly beneath the stile of good company, and can be allowable in no case, but from one wag to another, or betwixt a mountebank and his droll.

2. Ex.—But it sometimes happens, that a wag plays off a specimen of low comic impertinence on a stranger, or some person of respectable character ; and indeed the Stork, as of a different species of animal from the Fox, might be considered in the light of a stranger. Is it best, in this case, to return the wag's joke in his own coin, or to treat it with silent contempt ?

RES.—Where so happy a thought, as that of the Stork, suggests itself to the person thus bantered, he might laudably avail himself of it, as the best corrective of impertinence ; and this seems the instruction pointed out in the fable.

3. Ex.—But suppose no such happy return of

the joke to be thought of ; would then serious chastisement be more applicable than silent contempt ?

RES.—I am much inclined to think not : your irritable people, who resort to caning or kicking upon such occasions, shew how deeply they have felt a low joke, and infallibly draw the laugh of the world upon themselves ; and to revenge the impertinence of a single buffoon, frequently give handle for ridicule to a hundred wiser persons, than either the buffoon or themselves.

4. Ex.—But while I admit, that the example of the Stork's pleasantry might be followed, do you conceive, that I am justifying the *lex talionis*, (the law of retaliation) an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth ?

RES.—I do not think you intend it ; since we all know, whose authority set that law for ever at rest, as far as it could be applied to serious cases ; and no other ever entered into his contemplation.

FABLE-IX.

THE OAK AND THE REED.

AN Oak, one day, in conversation

With a poor Reed,

Laments his feeble frame and humble station.

“ Yes, a hard lot is thine indeed !

“ A lean Tom-tit of lightest weight,

“ Or breeze, that curls the surface of the lake,

“ For those poor shoulders, an o’erwhelming freight,

“ Force thee to bend with so much meekness,

“ I cannot but deplore thy weakness.

“ While lo ! my lofty port, and sturdy make,

“ Defy the rudest tempest’s shock,

“ And stand, unshaken, like a rock.

“ To thee, each breath of air, a boreas, blows ;

“ With which, while I behold thee reeling,

“ Storms are mere zephyrs to my feeling.

“ Pity ! thy race no safer dwelling knows

“ Than pools and swamps ’mid such exposure.

“ Could’st thou retire beneath my shade,

“ How well protected, might’st thou here repose,

“ Secure within the snug enclosure,

“ By my depending branches made.

“ If I my frank opinion may declare,

“ Dame Nature’s dealing, in thy case, was hard !”—

“ Thanks to thy feeling and kind care,”

Replies our gentle Reed ;

“ Of a good heart they are indeed

“ A creditable token ;

“ But I beseech thee to discard

“ This sympathy so tender.

“ Bending to every blast, I keep unbroken,

“ Although my frame is weak and slender ;

“ 'Tis true, so stout is thy resistance,

“ That, hitherto, no storm, no whirlwind's force,

“ With all the might that arms their course,

“ Has found sufficient strength to bend

“ Thy sturdy back ; but let us wait the end.”—

These words were hardly spoken,

When clouds th' horizon fair deform ;

And soon there comes a furious storm.

The Reed, as usual, bends unbroken ;

While all its violence and shocks

The Oak, with proud defiance, mocks.

But, with redoubled force, at last

Old Boreas blows him such a blast,

That, while the Reed was stooping low,

To 'scape th' increasing fury of his foe,

He hears the lordly boaster tumble,

And soon beholds his root, his trunk, his head,

In plight most piteous and humble,

Stretch'd on the earth, and number'd with the dead.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Is it wise for persons but slenderly provided, and of small pretensions, to listen eagerly to offers of patronage from those, who boast confidently of their power and prosperity?

RESPONDENT.—The fable appears intended to shew, that it is not.

2. Ex.—But may not protection be worth accepting, while at least these boasters continue in prosperity?

RES.—Not without caution, and well weighing, whether a reverse of fortune in the patron may not draw down with him, in his fall, the person protected.

3. Ex.—Has the fabulist judged well in making the Reed express itself with such grateful acknowledgment of the feeling and kind love of the Oak; since all the Oak had said might have been set down much more to the account of vanity than of compassion?

RES.—This was surely the proceeding of a candid and delicate mind, while doubting only, whether the protection kindly though ostentatiously offered, could have been given.

4. Ex.—But; to turn our attention more directly to the confident boaster here pointed at, whence arises it, that any human creature can calculate on his power and prosperity so unwisely, as to believe, that nothing can diminish, or affect them?

Res.—From his pride and vanity, which confine his whole thoughts to himself and his own present circumstances, and will not suffer him to contemplate that mutability, to which all human things are subject.

5. Ex.—To what end may we humbly conjecture that the Supreme Being has allowed this mutability to take place throughout the sublunary state of man?

Res.—What other end can we assign than that this life is a state of probation, and that these changes are intended, to minister occasion for the practice of some of our most important moral duties?

FABLE X.

THE OLD BACHELOR AND HIS TWO MISTRESSES.

A SOBER Bachelor, of certain age,
But somewhat tow'rd the greybeard drawing,
At length grown weary of see-sawing,
Thought, he might prudently engage
Th' affections of his heart, look out a wife ;
And enter on the married life.

In youth he hoarded up the pence ;
Time made them pounds ; and pounds made com-
petence.

Too well determin'd now to falter,
He takes the road to Hymen's altar :
Yet far too wary he, to snap
At every face, that set a cap.
'Mong those, who understood his meaning,
And were tow'rd matrimony leaning,

Two widows, flinging each a dart
At they same moment, thought, they reach'd his
heart.

One still was green, alert, and shrill of pipe ;
The other more than almost ripe ;
But skilful, to retain by art
Charms, that were ready to depart.
These widows, full of fun and laughter,

(You'd never guess, what they were after)
As if to spruce their Bachelor for dinner,
Their curling tongs, or tweezers each applies ;
Both much intent upon the prize ;
Each hoping, she might be the winner.
While this odd business was doing,
And our old spark, seem'd both, or neither wooing;
The elder dame pluck'd out each blacker hair ;
But t'other, thought he best might spare
Those mark'd by age, and turning grey :
So pluck'd ; so twitch'd ; so manag'd they,
To make her beau what each thought best,
Till the good man, of Nature's boon bereft,
Had not one solitary ringlet left.

Soon as he understood the jest,
" My belles, he cried, accept my thanks ;
" Tho', somewhat to my noddle's cost,
" My hair, both black and grey, I've lost,
" I hold myself a gainer by your pranks.
" Married to either should I thus be teaz'd,
" Till metamorphosed into what she pleas'd ;
" Nor e'er allow'd to think, or act, or speak,
" But in the character of Jerry Sneak' :
" So, ladies, on this hard condition,
" The wedding ring suits not my disposition :
" I'm still myself : I scorn to sham ;
" And so, I'll e'en continue, as I am."

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Whether of these two widows would you determine to have been the more unreasonable for attempting so total a change in our mature Bachelor, as their different proceedings shews each, to have been desirous of effecting?

RESPONDENT.—One, being represented as more nearly approaching his age than the other, not unnaturally expected, she should the more easily change him to her own humour: yet the other, probably founding her expectation of success on the superior influence of youthful charms, was as little inclined to despair as the former; so that we know not how to pronounce one more reasonable than the other.

2. Ex.—But the most important question is, whether both were not very unreasonable in expecting so entire a change in the character, habits, manners, and person, as the Bachelor reasonably concludes, would be attempted by either of these ladies, he might have chosen for a wife?

RES.—It were manifestly absurd to attempt, or expect so absolute a transformation in any human being; and still more so, in one whose habits had been confirmed by length of time.

3. Ex.—Our Bachelor being aware, that the future experiments projected would be equally unpleasant with that already undergone, can you hesitate in pronouncing upon his resolution of avoiding a connection with either?

Res.—It will at once be decided, he acted wisely.

4. Ex.—So far, then, you close with the instruction of the fable; but does it inculcate a right lesson in the Bachelor's determination, never to enter the state of matrimony on account of this disappointment?

Res.—Surely it does not; unless, the sex in general, maids, wives, and widows, be supposed as unreasonable as the two women in the fable, which the experience of most men happily contradicts.

5. Ex.—But is there not a certain point, to which a lady may laudably attempt after marriage, if it be not previously practicable, some alteration in the character of a husband, and to assimilate his manners and humour somewhat to her own?

Res.—Yes, so far, as she is sure, the wiser and better part of the world will think him improved by the change she may wish to effect; and provided, it be undertaken with due respect and delicacy.

FABLE XI.

THE WOMEN AND THE SECRET.

I KNOW a saucy Bard, who says,
“ Nothing more heavy than a secret weighs ”—
And adds, “ unless, with some to share it,
“ No woman ever far could bear it.”
But bid him tell you, ladies, when
This burthen was more light for men?
A countryman, in humbler life,
(A hum’rous wight he was, and married)
Must needs make trial of his wife;
How far, by her, this burthen could be carried.
One night, when lying at her side,
“ Ye pow’rs of midwif’ry, he cried,
“ Help! Help!—Then turning to his dame, he said,
“ Thy husband is deliver’d of an egg.”
“ An egg?”—“ Yes, yes, and just new-laid,
“ I feel it with my leg.
“ But bless thee, keep it secret, dear;
“ Once I conjure thee, and again;
“ For should’st thou let it go, I fear,
“ Each gossip would nick-name me, hen;
“ In short, thou must be mum.”
Altho’ so wond’rous an affair
Could not but make the woman stare,

She promis'd to be dumb ;
Nor, as her husband press'd it, was she loath,
To bind her promise by an oath.
But ah ! the binding prov'd not tight,
And only lasted during night.
Up rose the dame by break of day,
And to a neighb'ring gossip's house she ran—
“ So strange a thing has happen'd ! but I pray,
“ Lest I get drubb'd by my good man,
“ Whose temper has a little of the crab,
“ A single syllable you'll never blab.
“ Hear now this most mysterious matter,
“ (The like ne'er happen'd in the world before!)
—“ My spouse has laid an egg, as big as four.
“ Be sure now, Gran'am, don't you chatter.”—
“ Why, my good neighbour, cries the other,
“ Truly, I thought, you'd known me better ;
“ Believe me, as you would your mother,
“ I'll blab not half a word, nor e'en a letter.
“ So pry'thee, let no scruples teaze ye,
“ Go home, and make thyself quite easy.”
She went ; but scarce had reach'd the door,
When Goody felt the secret boiling o'er.
Her bounet on, away she paces,
And tells it only in ten places.
But, as few tales, twice-told agree,
The husband's egg was multiplied to three ;

Indeed, what story ever lost in telling ?
With the next gossip our's was swelling.
She in a whisper roundly swore,
The number was no less than four.
But whispers now became quite needless ;
For half the world had caught the rumour,
Alike the thoughtful, and the heedless ;
And as no dame was in the humour,
To let the story pass without improvement,
At ev'ry call, and nimble movement
Of tongues, that babbled without ceasing,
The number went on so increasing,
From three alone at early day,
(So each believ'd, or feign'd, or blunder'd)
That, by the evening's closing ray,
The good man's egg amounted to a hundred.

Note.—The story of this fable has been called low ; and not unjustly. But the weakness it chastises is general in all ranks of life ; common to both sexes, and of a very serious nature. The poignant vivacity with which La Fontaine has told the story, and his conduct of it, so true to Nature, would not allow the present fabulist to reject it, under the prime consideration of the moral importance of the subject. But he has taken care, in his paraphrastic imitation, to confine the scene and circumstances to lower life, conformably to the nature of the story. The fable, however, as he found it (Lib. viii. 6.) is with the volume dedicated by its Author, to the Dauphin of France ; was probably taught him, with the rest, by Bossuet, his preceptor, and read by the most polished courtiers of Louis XIV., the patrons and admirers of La Fontaine.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Is this difficulty of retention in the article of secrets more common in one sex than the other ?

RESPONDENT.—Although Fontaine's representation might mislead us to think so, the present fabulist, from his question in the fourth and fifth lines, appears not to adopt that opinion.

2. EX.—But, without further enquiry, whether of the two sexes is most liable to this weakness (since none is more common to both,) to what causes are we to attribute it ?

RES.—Partly to the secret vanity of shewing what confidence has been placed in us, and partly to the natural pleasure of exciting surprize by the relation of something new or strange.

3. EX.—Why do you call the former of these two causes the *secret* vanity of shewing what confidence others have placed in us ?

RES.—Because we scarcely seem aware, how much we are prompted by it, to expose our own infirmity.

4. EX.—Will you have the goodness to explain this ?

RES.—Surely we cannot manifest a greater weakness, while seemingly insensible of it, than to shew ourselves proud of a confidence reposed in

us at the very instant we are betraying it, and proving, how little we have deserved it.

5. Ex.—Does the second cause you have assigned, namely, the pleasure of communicating something new, or strange, make any excuse for the infirmity condemned in the fable?

Res.—No more than the pleasure we may have in committing any other fault: this in every case is an immoral, and would, if admitted, be a most dangerous plea.

6. Ex.—Why do you think so?

Res.—Because the most heinous crimes are probably at the moment of commission not unaccompanied by some transient pleasure, however horrid the remorse with which they may be followed. This plea is soon found too weak for the serious approval of a man's own conscience.

7. Ex.—Has not this fable been thought by some persons rather indelicate and low?

Res.—I believe, it has.

8. Ex.—Why then do you suppose it to have been admitted here?

Res.—Probably, because the author could find no other, in which this dangerous infirmity has been so happily exposed.

9. Ex.—Since the present fabulist, with a consideration wanting in the original author, has

pointedly placed the scene and the actors in low life, are not the circumstances at least all perfectly in nature ?

Res.—That will hardly be denied.

10. Ex.—Would it not then have been a proof rather of a squeamish fastidiousness than of good taste, to have rejected it ?

Res.—The present fabulist must doubtless have thought so ; and have trusted, that, when the importance of the apologue, for the reasons above, is weighed, no candid or moral critic would wish it left out of his book.

FABLE XII.

THE HORNETS AND THE BEES.

A HONEYCOMB was found, on some occasion,
The property of which the Hornets claim'd ;
The Bees opposed this reclamation :
Before Judge Wasp the process came.
A day was fixed to have it tried ;
But 'twas no easy matter to decide ;
For all the witnesses agreed,
They had observed, too narrowly, to doubt it,
Some insects on the comb, and some about it,
Possession fully bent to take ;
A wing'd and buzzing breed,
Of tann'd complexion, and of longish make.
Now this description answers to the Bee ;
Nor does it with the Hornet, less agree.
This likeness strange of either race
Posed my lord Judge, and puzzled much the case ;
Still darker made by Counsel Spinner :
He and his learned brother Rover,
Quite ready both for dinner,
Advise the Judge, to let the cause stand over.
But first, my lord, deliberate and wary,
Issues a writ of *certiorari*.
Tho' information was obtain'd ;

The cause at next assize remain'd,

But where it was before :

So 'twas proposed to have one hearing more.

Spinner now hinting a refreshing fee,

“ 'Tis full six months, exclaims a prudent Bee,

“ This action has been still depending :

“ With your demurrers, consultations,

“ New trials, pleadings, replications,

“ I fear, 'twill never have an ending.

“ But during all this fruitless cost, and toiling,

“ The honey-comb itself is spoiling.

“ To cut this mighty business short,

“ With the court's leave, I'll make a proposition ;

“ Which soon will bring you to decision.

“ Let the two parties, here in court,

“ Give each, a specimen of honey-making ;

“ Then let the Judge, and sage assessors,

“ Compare it with the comb in question ;

“ And say, which party were its right possessors.”

This task, of difficult digestion

To the poor Hornets, sets them all a quaking ;

And they decline the undertaking.

The Bees, meanwhile unanimous, apply,

“ 'Tis needless, says the Judge, to try ;

“ Which party knows the craft, is clear as day.

“ And I pronounce without delay ;

“ These Hornets live by robbery and wrong :

“Combs, cells, and honey to the Bees belong.”—
’Twere well, if half the causes, brought to hearing,
Were thus curtail’d by common sense.
What toil were saved, and what expense,
To make that plain, which needs no clearing !
But as the case, at present, stands,
The learned ambiguities of law
Thrive on your houses and your lands,
And seldom to conclusion draw,
Till the full bottoms of the bar,
No longer on your case at war,
Have pocketed the matter in dispute.
Ah ! then, you’ll say, they may as well be mute !
And since they’ve gulp’d the oyster, need I tell,
Their clients—they are welcome to the shell.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—What characters among men are most nearly represented by the Hornets ?

RESPONDENT.—Those idle pretenders and impostors, who steal the works and inventions of others, and live by labour and ingenuity not their own ?

2. Ex.—What are those, of which the Bees present an emblem ?

RES.—Able, industrious, and skilful mechanics ; ingenious authors ; inventors in arts and sciences ; whose patents are invaded, works pirated, and discoveries boasted and pretended to by those, who have no part in their composition, or invention.

3. Ex.—You have considered the piracy of the works of ingenious authors as one of the cases, to be brought under the censure of this fable ; but how would you define the literary pirate ?

RES.—One, who without an author's consent, and while he, or his bookseller still claims the property of his works, either publishes an edition of it for his own benefit ; or, without the plea of reviewing or criticising, makes such large extracts, as anticipate the curiosity of the public for the

original, and thus greatly diminish, if not prevent the sale.

4. Ex.—How do you distinguish translators and imitators from literary pirates?

RES.—The provinces both of translators and imitators, where their talents equal their pretensions, have ever, at the tribunal of criticism, been deemed highly honourable and ingenious. Translators enable an author of merit, possessing no language but his own, to speak many others, and thus at once extend the benefit and fame of his works. Imitators transmitting, without servility, the thoughts of original writers into their own compositions, and freely mingling new and congenial ideas, are generally thought to justify no inconsiderable claims to literary reputation.

5. Ex.—Though the direct moral of the fable is expressed in the Judge's decision of right between the Hornets and Bees, is not some useful intimation intended in the advice and management of the two pleaders in the apologue?

RES.—Some reflection is plainly levelled at a disposition in the gentlemen of the bar to ambiguities and delays.

6. Ex.—What is suggested by the concluding line of the fable?

RES.—That it sometimes happens in long con-

tention about property at the bar, that the matter in dispute is swallowed up by the expences of the law.

7. Ex.—To what should wise and well-intentioned persons resort for the termination of disputes concerning property, previously to any recurrence to the law?

Res.—To the arbitration of the best and wisest among the friends of each party; this, betwix the wise and well-intentioned at least, might prevent many a ruinous law-suit

FABLE XIII.

THE WOLF AND THE MASTIFF.

THE Dogs had kept a stricter guard ;
Or else the times were grown so hard,
That a poor Wolf was shrunk to skin and bone.
Prowling at large he met, one day,
A jolly Mastiff, who had lost his way ;
Sleek, in good case, and all alone.
The Wolf had certainly not fail'd t' attack him,
Since each plump quarter had supplied a dinner,
But that our Mastiff needed none to back him,
While t'other doubted, which might prove the
winner.
He thought it therefore best, in civil tone,
To enter into conversation :
And first observ'd with compliments high flown :
“ Your embonpoint, Sir, wins my admiration.”—
“ Would you become as sleek,” the Dog replies,
“ The thing's entirely in your pow'r :
“ Quit those vile woods, where all your race,
“ Hungry, nay, starv'd, in wretched case,
“ Look, as if bent each other to devour.
“ No day, e'er certain of a meal,
“ You bolt, at daggers drawn, the scraps you
steal.

- “ Would you fare better, follow me,
“ And soon the difference you’ll see.”—
“ But, in this change of situation,
“ I’d wish, replies the Wolf, some intimation,
“ As touching my employment.”
“ Your work ! says Hector, I can soon run o’er :
“ Night watch, and driving mumpers from the
door ;
“ The rest is all enjoyment.
“ But don’t forget, for time will run the faster,
“ With tricks and fawning ways to please your
master,
“ And the good folks about his house.
“ For by such means you’ll mend your living ;
“ By handfuls find ’em freely giving
“ Nice bones, cheese parings, scraps of souce,
“ Fat broth, and with these sav’ry messes,
“ Loading their gentle Wolf with kind caresses.”
Soon as his ear had caught all this,
He figur’d to himself such bliss,
He wept, o’erwhelm’d with joy :
But where is happiness without alloy ?
As they were trotting to the mansion hall,
The Wolf observ’d a sort of speck,
With hair rubb’d off, upon the mastiff’s neck.
“ Friend Hector ! hast thou told me all ?
“ Don’t this look rather queer ;

- “ This soreness just below your ear ? ”—
- “ Mere nothing ! ”—“ But you must explain. ”—
- “ Why, ’tis a little rub, you see,
- “ An’t please your curiosity,
- “ Done by the collar of my chain. ”—
- “ Your chain ?—what then you are not free ?
- “ You run not where you please, like me ? ”—
- “ Not always ; and what signifies it ? ”—
- “ Here, cries the Wolf, we disagree ;
- “ I value freedom ; you don’t prize it.
- “ Give me my liberty : take you your treats,
- “ Your bones, your broth, your sav’ry meats :
- “ Freedom’s too great a price for any treasure ;
- “ Gold may be bought too dear :
- “ So, friend ! I quit you here :
- “ To roam at liberty, is all my pleasure.
- “ I hold your kind proposals not expedient :
- “ Farewell ; I’m off ; so Sir, your most obedient.”

QUESTIONS, &c.

1.—EXAMINER.—Which state is the more desirable; the social dependence of the Dog, or the wild independence of the Wolf?

RESPONDENT.—If a squalid and almost constant state of want, though not without occasional abundance, but that generally acquired by violence or injustice, be the proper representation of the Wolf's natural independence and liberty, while the Dog's plenty, ease and happiness are to be regarded as the fruits of his submission to some restraint upon his natural liberty, there can surely be little hesitation in preferring the dependent state of the Dog.

2. Ex.—Does not *Æsop*, (probably the original author of this fable) seem to lean to the contrary conclusion? But how do you account for it?

RES.—There appears little reason to doubt his conclusion such: *Æsop* having passed his life in the unnatural condition of slavery, and having in many instances, it is likely, witnessed great evil in it among others, though he might not have experienced it in his own person, his judgment on this subject was probably much warped, and might lead him to think, that liberty of any kind was preferable to any kind of dependence.

3. Ex.—But I would ask, whether, unless in such a miserable state of nature as that of the Wolf, absolute independence can exist?

Res.—It may be well doubted.

4. Ex.—At least; is not the supposition incompatible with the notion of civil society?

Res.—Perhaps, it is.

5. Ex.—I will propose a series of questions which may lead to the full solution of this case: that persons, however, in the lower conditions of civil society are, and must be dependent, will at once be granted. But are not even men the most highly elevated, whether by *rank*, *power*, or *wealth*, dependent like others?

Res.—It may be so; but by our questions relative to each of these conditions, you may lead us to a more decisive conclusion.

6. Ex.—First then, what is *rank* or precedence in civil society, but a species of superiority, which can only exist by the courtesy of others?

Res.—It seems justly so described: where all are resolved and able to go the same pace at the same time, it is plain, that none either precede or follow. But where age, wisdom, or virtue, are made the ground of pretensions to precedence, it will rarely be refused; and hence springs that allowance and favour among mankind, which we

call courtesy, and on which rank absolutely depends.

7. Ex.—But cannot the sovereign grant rank to whomsoever he pleases?

RES.—He can grant a title, which may demand courtesy; but whether this be paid, or not, depends on the will of his subjects.

8. Ex.—But cannot he compel the payment of it?

RES.—He might, with great inconvenience, do so in a few instances, and on some particular occasions; but it would be impossible to persist in any such compulsion by laws, or punishments, without the consent and good will of the subject. This however, it may be observed, is a very different case from the interference of law and punishment with respect to positive actions whence real evil and hurt arise to society: here compulsion must take place.

9. Ex.—Is not rank then dependent upon others, for that which constitutes its existence, viz.: the payment of courtesy?

RES.—I confess it.

10. Ex.—To proceed now to the consideration of *civil power*: suppose, the power of a monarch; of a minister of state, or of the leader of an army; what, in the first place, constitutes the power of a king?

RES.—The will of the people to obey him : in the cases of conquest, or tyranny, the will of a military force.

11. EX.—What that of a minister of state ?

RES.—The will of the sovereign.

12. EX.—What that of the leader of an army ?

RES.—The will of that army, to follow him and to fight under his command.

13. EX.—May we not now conclude, that power in the three cases of persons supposed to possess the greatest share of it in civil society, is dependent on the will of others ?

RES.—It is undeniable ; and the same may be equally concluded of all other cases of civil power.

14. EX.—But this power being a relative thing as existing only in society, should it not be distinguished from personal power, or that of which every person partakes in some degree by the gift of Nature ; for instance, bodily strength and the faculties of the understanding ?

RES.—Yes : this distinction is obvious, and the more so, as these natural or personal powers may be stiled to a certain degree independent.

15. EX.—Yet are not the most important and numerous objects, on which they act, or can be made useful, foreign to his own person and dependent upon others ?

RES.—Yes ; doubtless they are, when employed in society.

16. Ex.—And is it then not better, and more honourable for men to enter in civil society, in order to render these powers naturally and extensively useful ?

RES.—Surely it is ; since, unless they do so, their independence, in the possession of these powers, would be savage, and of very limited use, like that of the Wolf in the fable.

17. Ex.—Now if *rank* and *power* in civil society cannot be independent, tell me, whether *wealth* can be so ?

RES.—Quite as little as the other two.

18. Ex.—How do you prove this ?

RES.—Is it not evident to the slightest reflection that, while men are acquiring wealth, they are continually and necessarily dependent on others for those labours, arts, and sciences, which must be in some way or other exercised, as the means of acquiring it ?

19. Ex.—But suppose a certain quantity of wealth acquired, and that, entirely satisfied with it, we aim at no farther acquisition ; are we then independent ?

RES.—No more than before.

20. Ex.—Say why ?

RES.—Because a man can neither eat, nor drink his gold; it cannot in itself, either clothe him, wait upon his person, or exercise his commissions. He must now exchange his wealth for these satisfactions, and will find himself dependent on the farmer, the butcher, the cook, and many others, for his table; on the vintner, &c. for his wine; on the spinner, the weaver, and the draper, &c. for his clothes. He must hire service, and where he can, ability, intelligence, and good will with it; on all which he will find much of his comfort and happiness dependent.

21. Ex.—What now is the just conclusion from all the foregoing considerations?

RES.—That man in civil society, whatever be his situation, is, and must be a dependent creature; and, that, since human existence in a wild state of nature is and must be savage, squalid, and miserable, Providence undoubtedly designed, that we should unite in civil states and communities, and become mutually dependent upon, and helpful to one another.

22. Ex.—In our investigation of the proper moral instruction to be derived from this fable, might we not without caution, have been misled by the Wolf's disdain of the Dog's condition, and preference of his own, to dangerous conclusions in

comparing the wildness and apparent gaiety, liberty and independence of a state of nature, with the comfort, convenience and happiness only to be found, and secured in civil society?

Res.—Too much caution could not be used, to prevent a wrong judgment on this important apologue, nor will less have been necessary with respect to some others.

FABLE XIV.

THE CAT AND THE RATS.

GRIMALKIN made great havock 'mong the Rats :
Scarce was a solitary straggler seen ;
Such was their mortal dread of Cats !
For countless had their funerals been !
Most, that remained, close quarters kept at home ;
And each to short allowance come,
Starv'd, o'er his miserable morsel, groans.
Grimalkin, their raw-head and bloody bones,
Stalks in each scar'd imagination ;
Sole subject of their conversation !
But he, since bus'ness was grown slack,
They heard, one ev'ning was departing,
On an engagement of sweet-hearting ;
And not, before next morning, to come back.
Mean time, the Rats in council met
For secret consultation,
On the sad posture of affairs.
He, who their president was set,
A Rat of riper age, and observation,
His sentiment declares.
Their case admitting no delay,
His sage opinion, in three words to tell,
Was—" They must cunningly devise a way

“ Round the Cat’s neck to fix a bell.

“ Suppose him then on war to think,

“ And on their confines now encroaching,

“ Soon as the bell announced the foe approaching,

“ They to their holes, in safety each might slink.”

With this resource th’ assembly closed,

Since for a better all were fairly posed,

But on one point their wits are forced to dwell ;

The means of hanging that same bell.

“ Let those that like the problem, chew it,

“ I were a fool, says one, to do it.”

“ Tho’ all my courage will allow,

“ Another cries, I don’t know how.”

“ A third wants strength, and he don’t chuse it,”

In short, they, one and all, refuse it.

Thus among men, in seasons of alarm,

You’ll see the council-board with sages swarm ;

But when their plans are ripe for execution,

Not one can summon resolution.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Must we understand this fable as a direct reflection on the counsellors of kings and states?

RESPONDENT.—Not directly, I suppose; for it were unreasonable, in a thousand cases, to expect the members of a council, to be the fittest persons to execute their own decrees.

2. Ex.—On what do you ground this opinion?

Res.—On the common principle, that theory and practice are widely different provinces; and that counsellors of state may wisely plan that, which others will more ably and properly execute.

3. Ex.—At what then is the fable levelled?

Res.—Much more fitly at any society or company, where all the members are nearly on an equal foot and assailed by some common enemy, or adverse circumstance, which every one is personally interested to repel, and all equally concerned in devising the most effectual means.

4. Ex.—In such a society, or company then, whose objects of combination you undoubtedly suppose few and limited, may all its members be expected, to shew themselves able and ready, though not equally perhaps so, to execute what they advise?

RES.—Yes ; all, not unreasonably ; but certainly a majority at least.

5. EX.—What now is the main scope of our apologue ?

RES.—To shew how much readier men in general are, to give good advice than to practice it.

FABLE XV.

SIMONIDES PRESERVED BY THE GODS.

A MAN of rhyme,* well known in France,
(To find the place would lead me a sad dance)

But, somewhere, says :

“ Three objects claim a Poet’s highest praise.

“ Above, the Gods, as all must know ;

“ Our Prince, our Mistress ; here below.”

Who will deny the maxim’s good,

Where’er ’tis rightly understood ?

The Prince, who merits praise, will thank you,

The Belle among her fav’rites rank you ;

But from my fable you will learn,

The Gods are they who make the best return.

Simonides once undertook

An ode upon some Pugilist of Greece ;

The thing was in the way of trade,

As modern authors bargain for a book,

The sheets, or pages at so much a-piece ;

Here ’twas each line, or stanza to be paid.

Pen, ink, and paper were before him,

The Muse of course inyok’d ;

* Malherbe.

But ere the Poet thrice his chin had strok'd,
The subject seem'd to bore him.
Merc naked facts were soon related ;
And they not such, as would be highly rated :
The Boxer's parentage was low ;
A pedlar leaves no honours to inherit ;
And bruising was our hero's only merit.
As a gold ring cannot be made of wood,
The Poet did the best he cou'd ;
Then sought for some allusion, or example,
And one soon offer'd full and ample :
Those fam'd twin boxers, known of old,
And high among the stars enroll'd,
Had dealt in combats, worthy to be told.
Describing circumstance, and time and place,
Here the bard flourish'd with a grace.
Our Boxer, taking measure of the song,
Finds the warm praises of the brother Gods,
Beyond his own o'erflowing at such odds,
That full two thirds to them belong.
A talent was the Poet's price,
And had been promised by the fighter ;
Who paid him, by adjustment nice,
One third ; confessing it was lighter
Than the whole sum expected by the other :
Then added with sarcastic jest,
" I must refer you, for the rest,

- “ To your friends, Castor, and his brother :
“ Safe credit may to them be giv’n ;
“ So rest contented with your wealth in Heav’n—
“ Mean time at supper, if you’ll meet,
“ A jovial party at my house to night,
“ I’ll promise you a treat.
“ There’ll be my uncle, aunt, and cousin,
“ (I think, you know ’em all by sight)
“ With some good friends ; about a dozen ;
“ And, take my word, no lack of fun ;
“ Simonides, you must make one.”
He promised to be there,
Aware, that, if he kept away,
He might not only miss his pay,
But the respect the company might show him,
And compliments upon his poem.
All met at table in high glee :
Enough, be sure, of eating, drinking ;
Abundant mirth, and little thinking ;
When lo ! the porter enters suddenly—
“ Two strangers at the door demand the Poet ;
“ I come in haste, to let him know it.”
He quits the room : the strangers none could guess ;
They tried ; but no one wagg’d a jaw the less.
Who should th’ astonish’d Poet meet,
But the twin brothers, waiting in the street !
“ We come, they cry, to thank you for your lays ;

“ And, as a proof we value much your praise,

“ We warn you, ere we reckon five,

“ To quit these premises, while yet alive.

“ Affection solely prompts our call ;

“ For lo ! this house is doom'd to fall.”

No sooner the prediction pass'd their lips,

Than from its base a column slips :

The ceiling left without its stay,

I need not say, how soon, gave way.

This in an instant overset the table ;

Plates, dishes, glasses, all in fragments lay ;

Butler and lacqueys sprawling on the floor.

Knock'd down, or stunn'd, no soul was able,

While walls remain'd, to grope his way

To the next passage, and still less, the door.

The worst now hear : the Gods resolv'd,

To crown the vengeance to their Poet due.

The Boxer and his guests were all involv'd,

Met, each, some mischief, that he long might rue.

The boxer's leg a falling beam

Had fractur'd ; and the rest all scream ;

One “ that his nose is beat awry ;”

Another, “ he has lost an eye ;”

A third, “ that he is lame.”

The matter soon was trumpeted by Fame :

All said, that miracles not yet had ceased :

The Poet's glory was increas'd :

The Boxer's conscience, sorely troubled,
Ne'er rested, till the Poet's fees were doubled.
Conviction to his mind too late was given,
"That the whole tribe were favorites of Heaven."
A Poet's wish my story ends:
"Olympus and Parnassus, long be friends!"

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Did not the pugilist, who grudged, that the Gods should receive praise at his expence, deserve punishment ?

RESPONDENT.—It cannot be denied.

2. EX.—But why do you think so ?

RES.—Because man, who lives and moves and holds the whole of his being at the will of his Creator, cannot refuse him adoration and praise without irreverence and ingratitude, and consequently merits his displeasure.

3. EX.—But even this does not seem the whole of the pugilist's impiety : for what are we to infer from his ironical sarcasm, where he says of the Gods—

“ Safe credit may to them be giv'n ;

“ So rest contented with your wealth in Heav'n ?”

RES.—Since irony leads us always to understand the contrary to what is said, we may here infer the pugilist's doubts, whether the Gods would reward those, who sing their praises, and repose a pious trust in their superintendance and justice.

4. EX.—Does not the character of a pugilist

seem more truly rendered by this want of piety toward the Gods?

RES.—This feature is by no means unnatural.

5. EX.—Would the same sentiments be much out of place, if attributed to the boxers by profession in our own days?

RES.—It may well be questioned, whether they be not applicable.

6. EX.—Is it not unbecoming in persons, who rank as gentlemen, to encourage and patronize these brutal combatants?

RES.—It must surely be thought unworthy of them.

7. EX.—By what motive can we suppose them to be actuated?

RES.—Too much probably by something like a savage gratification they find in it.

8. EX.—But have you not heard a patriotic motive sometimes assigned for this patronage?

RES.—Yes; that the courage of our common people, from their being accustomed to witness these bloody combats, is fostered, and kept from degenerating.

9. EX.—Does this opinion seem rationally founded?

RES.—There appears much reason at least, to doubt the necessity of such a kind of encourage-

ment; since the French, Germans, and many other nations, who take no particular delight in these spectacles, have invariably maintained their character for courage.

10. Ex.—Have the refinements of a lettered and polite education in our naval and military officers, our admirals and generals, had the effect of lessening their courage?

Res.—Impossible; since there are no braver men in the world: but, with a few disgraceful exceptions, it is not supposed those distinguished characters, those noble defenders of their country, ever condescend to witness or countenance these inhuman combats.

11. Ex.—Whence then in persons, who hold the name and rank of gentlemen, can this vague opinion of patriotism, not to mention the delight which they take in these combats, have arisen?

Res.—Too probably from a neglected education; and the want of that taste and refinement of manners and sense of decorum, the ordinary consequences of such neglect.

12. Ex.—What are the natural effects of this practice on the combatants themselves?

Res.—A tendency to brutalize their manners; to render them regardless of the order of society, and inclined on every little injury, real or imagined,

to revenge themselves, and take justice, as they perhaps may call it, out of the hands of the magistrate into their own.

13. **Ex.**—What are its 'natural' effects on the people as spectators?

Res.—To render them disorderly, unfeeling, and ferocious.

FABLE XVI.

THE HUSBANDMAN AND STAG.

THAT masters, whatsoe'er their occupation,
For close inspection often find occasion ;
Our ancient fabulist shall tell.
The hounds were opening in full cry,
Close by a thicket's side ;
Where an old Stag was used to hide.
He thought his enemies full nigh ;
And, to elude each rav'nous jaw,
Sought an ox-stall, and slipp'd beneath the straw.
“ What, cries a wary Ox, that saw him hiding,
“ What seek'st thou here but certain death ?
“ For thee, near man, there is no safe abiding :
“ Fly, or contented yield thy breath.”—
“ We brutes, at least so nearly kin,”
Replies the Stag, “ should spare each other.
“ You see the sad distress I'm in ;
“ I trust, you'll not betray a brother.—
“ Full well I know, that ven'son-eater, man,
“ Will work my ruin, if he can.
“ But when these howling fiends depart,
“ And fairly lose the scent, I'll start.”
Snug, in his hiding-place, he lay :
An hour, or two, had pass'd away ;

The Herdsman, as his time directs,
Visits the stall ; just eyes his care ;
Flings 'em their corn ; departs ; nor once suspects
A creature, save his Oxen, there.
The labo'ers about the farm
Pass, and repass the stall :
The Bailiff peeps in turn ; perceives no harm ;
In short, our Stag escapes the sight of all.
Rejoiced, that matters went so well,
His heart its feelings longs to tell :—
“ To each kind Ox my thanks I give ;
“ Thro' whose benevolence I live.”—
“ Yes, cries an old one, of the horned breed,
“ So far 'tis well ; but still take heed.
“ One still may come, who has a hundred eyes ;
“ One, who alas ! too fearless stranger !
“ May yet thy confidence surprise,
“ And prove thee yet, not fairly out of danger.”
When one prognosticates disaster,
It often seems to come the faster.
No sooner had our elder finished
A speech, which somewhat had diminished
The satisfaction of his guest,
Than at the stall, behold ! the master !
A Husbandman with care oppress'd,
Looking all round him with chagrin,
He cries : “ These Oxen look so thin !

“ That, sure, I’ve reason to suspect

“ My servants guilty of neglect.

“ This has no hay ; that wants his corn ;

“ And dirty cobwebs hide another’s horn.

“ And what conclusion must I draw,

“ This heap close by, to see ’em wanting straw ?

“ Masters of due economy observant,

“ Must sometimes condescend to act the servant.

“ At least I’m sure, ’twill break no law,

“ To throw my animals a little straw.”

A fork snatch’d up, some straw he takes :

“ Hey-day ! what’s here beneath, that quakes :

“ A pair of branching horns perk out !

“ A Stag ! sure not !—my eyes I doubt.

“ ’Tis so : a noble brute by Jove !

“ Ho ! Tom ! Ned ! Will ! bring here my gun ;

“ I’ll lay him low :—See there his business done !

“ Such easy sport as this I love :

“ It was indeed no pleasant matter,

“ To find my Oxen grown no fatter :

“ But I’ll forget it, now at least ;

“ And tell the story at a ven’son feast.”

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Although nothing is so common as the neglect of duty in servants, and other persons commissioned in matters of trust, would it be wise in any man to dismiss all confidence, and to take his whole business upon his own shoulders?

RESPONDENT.—Since, in a state of civil society, no man can do every thing for himself, and some sort of substitution is necessary in a thousand articles, even in the most private station, it would be very unwise, to repose no confidence in others.

2. Ex.—But since you allow, it will be often abused, can he possibly be too cautious in whom he reposes it?

RES.—Without doubt, every wise man, who has experienced this abuse, ought to accustom himself, more and more, to examine well the characters, pretensions and principles of those he intends to employ. But since perfection belongs not to man, even caution itself must have its limits.

3. Ex.—But would you justify a man, who, having a large and extensive property, gives the superintendence of it to some cunning, active, self-interested and suspicious character, of whom his

principal has nothing better to say, than, that “although he cheats me, he will suffer no one else to do it?”

RES.—No; this would be the confidence of neither a wise, nor a good man; but the indolence of a careless one, and of lax principles, himself. A christian moralist could not acquit him of the guilt of partaking of other mens’ sins; for such indolence encourages malversation.

4. Ex.—You judge rightly of this case; but as a cautious, wise and good man will, after all his care, find himself frequently mistaken in the character of his servants and substitutes, what is he to do then?

RES.—Plainly, to dismiss those whom he has found unworthy of his confidence, and look out for better. But, in the mean time, where the effects of idleness, or neglect in the former, have not been such as to be punishable by the laws, to bear them with patience among the necessary evils of life.

5. Ex.—Has not the Husbandman in the fable a merit even beyond that of patience?

RES.—Yes, that of good humour, and making the best of a bad matter.

6. Ex.—But why, for our completer instruction, are we not told, that he dismissed his careless servants?

RES.—Partly, because his character of great circumspection leaves us fairly to suppose the dismissal; and partly perhaps because the main drift of the fable turns upon the conduct of the Stag.

7. Ex.—What then is the lesson taught us by his conduct?

RES.—That what appears the best measure, to which we may happen to resort under any sudden danger or calamity, may fail of security; but that when we have recurred to what we thought the best, or perhaps our only resource in the exigency, we may submit to the consequences without self-reproach.

8. Ex.—But when the Ox had acquainted the Stag, he had reason to believe him not safe, should he not instantly have sprung from his covert?

RES.—He had resolved to do so, as soon as he supposed the hounds at a distance; but to have started sooner would have been to quit an uncertain good for a certain evil, as, doubtless, flight yet appeared to him.

FABLE XVII.

THE TWO MULES.

Two Mules were footing the same road ;
But carrying each a different sort of load.

One jogg'd on, like your common hacks,
With barley to the mill.

A Mule of office, t'other bore
Part of the nation's load, the income tax,
With prouder step and free good-will,
Upon that score.

Jingling his bells, as on he went,
He pass'd our humble carrier with a frown ;
Hardly deigning to look down.

When lo ! a gang of thieves on treasure bent,
His bridle seize, and stop him short.

They feel his kicks, and hear him snort :
Resistance vain ! a pistol's shot

Levels our Mule of office with the spot.

“ Is this the fruit of honour and high place ! ”

He groans out, wailing his hard lot :

“ How different that poor drudge's case !

“ Safe, unregarded, goes the lubber by ;

“ While thus, methinks, I hear him cry :

“ Ah ! friend, full oft a place at court

“ Proves naught but fortune's cruel sport :

“ With me, thou might'st have 'scap'd these woes,
say I,

“ Had'st thou been drudging for the mill—good
bye!”

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—What are the most prominent marks of that vanity and weakness, which men so often discover upon advancement to posts of honour, or high office?

RESPONDENT.—Their vanity appears in the supercilious airs, with which they are apt to insult their less fortunate equals: their weakness, in the confidence, which they place in the instability of prosperous circumstances, and adventitious distinctions.

2. Ex.—Why are they less able than persons of moderation and sobriety of spirit, to bear up against the assaults of adversity, or of sudden calamity?

RES.—Their confidence and vanity naturally prevent foresight; and the want of foresight prevents due preparation of mind, to endure, with firmness or patience, the changes of fortune.

3. Ex.—Had not the late prosperity of the Mule so filled him with pride and vanity, was there not one subject of consolation, to which he might have resorted in his last hour?

RES.—Yes, a very fair one, in reflecting, that his calamity had not been occasioned by any

malversation or abuse of his office; but solely by the lawless violence of others.

4. Ex.—Though the vanity and confidence of the mule in office had ill prepared him for the fatal end he met with, what are we to think of the reflections it drew from his companion?

RES.—That they bear strong marks of ungenerous insult and an unforgiving spirit.

5. Ex.—But did not the haughty disdain, which he had experienced from the other in his prosperity, seem to justify them?

RES.—Certainly not. The misfortunes of an enemy have just claim to our compassion; and still more those of one, whom we could regard in no worse light than a proud, unsocial neighbour.

FABLE XVIII.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

IN this bad world, whatever fails,
The law of strongest oft prevails.
At the clear current of a spring,
A Lamb had stopp'd to quench his thirst.
It matters little, who came first ;

But hunger and adventures chanced to bring
A Wolf, before his breakfast, to the spot.

“Somewhat too bold, there ! art thou not,”

In wrath the Wolf exclaims,

“To mud the water which I drink ?

“Thy rashness, sirrah, smart correction claims.”—

“Small cause to move your honour's wrath, I
think”—

Replies the Lamb :

“Would you but please t' observe, Sir, where I am,

“Full twenty yards below you ;

“I could not mud the spring for you,

“As common sense must shew you.”—

“I tell you, that you do ;”

Returns the cruel beast :

“But this, I hope, you'll not deny at least,

“That, just about a year ago,

“'Twas you, that scandalized me so.”—

“ An’t please your worship, as a lie I scorn,
“ Long since, believe me, I was born ;
“ And still am suckled by my mother.”
“ Hoh ! then it was your brother ;”—
“ I have none,”—“ Well then, one of your odd
folks at home,
“ You, or your shepherd, or the dogs around ye,
“ Always at war with me, confound ye ;
“ Deny it if you can. So come,
“ On you, the first, I lay my thumb ;
“ A culprit for high treason.”

With that, defying justice, law, and reason,
The Lamb he seizes, struck quite dumb ;
Then drags his victim from the water :

To the next wood, as soon as come,
Proceeds the ruthless ruffian to the slaughter.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—By what was the Wolf's deliberate cruelty greatly aggravated ?

RESPONDENT.—By false accusation and insult.

2. EX.—But was there no other aggravation ?

RES.—Yes ; not only the falsehood and impudence of his first accusation ; but the impossibility of its being true.

3. EX.—Are we to suppose, that among the sons of men, any are to be found capable of such enormity ?

RES.—We are unwilling to believe it ; but the fabulist undoubtedly supposed it, or his apologue would be without meaning.

4. EX.—But were we actually sitting in judgement on such a case, ought we not to enquire, whether, though no circumstance appears which could absolve the culprit, there were any, which might at least be urged in extenuation of his crime ?

RES.—Yes : the Wolf, it is said, was impelled to the commission of it by the violence of hunger.

5. Ex.—But do you mean this plea should entitle him to pardon?

RES.—By no means ; but, in some small degree, lessen his punishment.

6. Ex.—But should the necessitous hunger of an unsocial vagabond, living like the Wolf, by violence and robbery, form as strong a plea for the diminution of punishment, as that of an orderly citizen, who, reduced to famine at some fatal moment of inevitable penury, should commit a like crime with the Wolf's in the fable?

RES.—Necessity is said to have no law; and suppose the maxim true, yet the necessity of a creature, who will live out of all order of civil society, nor in any circumstance pay obedience to law, has, under commission of the same crime, by many degrees a weaker plea for the diminution of punishment.

FABLE XIX.

THE HEIFER, THE GOAT AND THE SHEEP, IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LION.

A HEIFER, Goat, and sister Sheep thought good,
To enter into league

With a proud Lion in their neighbourhood.

'Twas no political intrigue :

They meant fair partnership in loss or gains.

Lo ! first the Goat a prize obtains :

Caught in his toils a bouncing Deer,

He bade the partners of the firm draw near.

The Lion reck'ning on his paw,

“ We're four ; yes, four, I see ; he cries,

“ Met here to share the prize.”

He makes four parcels, as requir'd the law,*

Of equal size.

In quality of prince with royal air,

He seizes the first share.

“ All, of your sov'reign's right aware,

“ No doubt, this first concede.

“ The second, here, is mine by law ;

“ The law, you know, of stronger.

“ My valour wins the third : and now take heed,

* The law of their compact.

“ That for the fourth my claim’s without a flaw ;
“ Nor will I urge it longer :
“ Touch it who dares ; but let him note,
“ My paw’s, that instant, down the caitiff’s throat.”

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Why have the fabulists, should you suppose, chosen such weak and inferior animals as a Heifer, Goat and Sheep, to enter into partnership with the Lion?

RESPONDENT.—To shew us, in applying this representation to human life, that weak and ignorant persons only would expect no advantage to be taken of them in such a compact with one very superior in power.

2. EX.—How would you characterize a man of great power acting the part of the Lion in the fable?

RES.—As an oppressive tyrant, without sense of honour, or justice.

5. EX.—But is not the case of the fable, as it concerns the conduct of the Lion, an uncommon one?

RES.—History, antient and modern, to the latter of which we may apply the great political transactions of a certain despot in the present time, prove the contrary.

Note.—The present fabulist believes, this apologue might often be much too hastily applied beyond the sphere of politics, to which perhaps it was originally confined: for in common life, and particularly in commerce, such associations are necessary and wise.

FABLE XX.

THE BEAU JACKDAW.

THE Jackdaw was resolv'd to shine ;
And thinking proper to assume
The Peacock's plume,
He pick'd up, here and there, a feather,
And thought, they made him wonderfully fine,
When stuck upon his jet-black coat together.
Become a Peacock in his dress,
He soon conceived himself no less,
Than Peacock's company.
And joining the next set
By chance he met,
Perceived himself less welcome far, than free.
At first, it set the younger ones all giggling,
To see him strutting, frolicking and niggling ;
A very Jackdaw, 'spite of all grimaces.
Soon wearied with his chattering and pertness,
Both old and young, with great alertness,
Pluck'd every borrow'd plume so gay,
And drove him mortified away ;
No more inclined to court the Graces.
Now flying to his antient steeple,
A colony of Jackdaw people,

His hopes again no less deceive him.
Shock'd at his airs, and mean desertion,
They shew him nothing but aversion,
And will no more receive him.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—It is needless to ask, whether foppery in dress is ridiculous : but in what circumstances does it become contemptible ?

RESPONDENT.—In its frequent attempts to attract notice by finery out of the wearer's character.

2. EX.—In what view may this be regarded, as a lighter species of dishonesty ?

RES.—In the assumption of something not one's own ; something generally belonging to our superiors.

3. EX.—Of what does a man betray a consciousness, who hangs out false colours like our Jackdaw ?

RES.—Surely of the want of real merit.

4. EX.—Into what particular inconvenience and absurdity of conduct does the fable shew us, that the fop's vanity is likely to tempt him ?

RES.—That of quitting his own sphere and thrusting himself into the society of his betters, who will certainly despise him.

5. EX.—What must he expect, when being laughed or turned out of their company, he would return to his own fraternity ?

RES.—Well-merited contempt and rejection, like that which met the Jackdaw.

6. EX.—Foppery in dress may lead to foppery in manners. The letters of a celebrated Nobleman to his Son, abounding with advice *to court and sacrifice to the Graces*, having, on points, where the advice has no tendency to relax the rigour of moral principle, been advantageously attended to in polite education, I would ask, whether the national character of the British gentry would be really improved by much greater refinement of manners than it exhibits at present.

RES.—Manners very elegant and refined being those which are, at the same time, the most natural and easy, are found so universally captivating, and are thence so easily made conducive to the success of insincere purposes, that the Christian moralist can hardly wish the manners of the educated ranks of British society, to pass their present point of refinement.

FABLE XXI.

AN ASS TOO FREE AND EASY.

A THING, which really excites one's spleen ;
A case as common, as provoking,
Is, that an Ass is often seen,
Upon his betters to be joking.

A youngster, of the long-ear'd race,
Meets the wild Boar ; stern, ranging thro' the
wood,

With nimble pace :

Forgetful of his own disparity,
Or thinking his own claims as good,
He asks with pert familiarity,
As if one Ass had met another,
“ How fares it, gentle brother ?
“ Say, does your family, or mine inherit,
“ Yours, in sharp tusks ; or mine, in length of ears,
“ The more distinguish'd merit ?”

The Boar indignant hears,
And foaming bristles up with rage,
As threat'ning to engage ;
When turning round, with sudden recollection,
“ Begone ; 'it ill becomes the brave,
“ To pour his vengeance on a slave :
“ Thy meanness proves thy sole protection.”

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Is there any better way of correcting this asinine impertinence, often met with, than by the contempt with which it was returned by the Boar?

RESPONDENT.—There is in general no better way.

2. EX.—Some questions on the subject of wag-gish impertinence having been proposed, and solved, on the fable of the Fox and the Stork, I would ask, whether the impertinence of stupid and ignorant coxcombs should not be corrected by an expression of contempt different from that, which was proper toward the wag, or the droll?

RES.—Certainly: contempt conveyed either by silence, or some happy turn of wit, recommended in that case, would be misunderstood, or thrown away in this before us.

3. EX.—To what then, specifically, ought we to resort on occasions of being troubled with the coxcombical impertinence like this in the fable?

RES.—To the short scornful reproof of the Boar; or, on a repetition of the offence, to menaces of corporal chastisement, accompanied

by expressive signs, gestures, and sharper tones of voice.

4. Ex.—Though corporal punishment may be threatened, can it ever be applied to stupid impertinence, unless under the relation of parent and child, teacher and pupil, (nor here unless persisted in) or master and servant, consistently with the respect the person offended owes to himself?

Res.—I think very rarely; for, in many cases, blows may provoke blows, and then the offended party becomes ridiculous.

5. Ex.—But may it not be questioned, whether personal castigation can be threatened in any case where not seriously meant?

Res.—It cannot, unless the threat has escaped under a momentary impulse of indignation, which frequently accompanies our contempt; for then it is seriously meant, though the design may not remain on a little cool recollection. Otherwise a man stands convicted of insincerity toward himself; a painful feeling to an ingenuous mind.

6. Ex.—On the result then, do you apprehend, that an impertinent humour in persons of mean understanding, must sometimes be left uncorrected in any way, and that incorrigibility must be borne with?

RES.—Instances of this nature may certainly occur ; and the wise will treat them rather as natural than moral evils, and cease to contend with them, when they cannot be overcome.

7. Ex.—Would not society gain on the score of good temper and candour of mind, if unpleasant sentiments and disagreeable speeches were oftener set down to want of natural discernment ?

RES.—Indeed there seems reason to believe so ; since a disposition must first be cultivated to estimate duty and make constant allowance for characters of duller intellect and inferior merit : for where is it, they do not abound ?

FABLE XXII.

THE FROG AND THE OX.

A FROG, no bigger than an egg,
Stood eyeing a fine Ox, of noblest size :
Behold ! the minikin, I beg,
Moved more with envy than surprize,
Begins to stretch, to stare, to swell ;
You'll doubtless, wonder while I tell,
To hear, the creature, not o'erwise,
Is aiming at the Ox's size.
“ Observe me, mother, while I puff,
(A call she's frequently repeating)
“ Pray tell me, is not this enough ?”
“ O ! no, replies the mother, quite astonish'd,
“ And could thy folly be admonish'd,
“ His size thou'dst never think of meeting !”
She tried again, and swelling bluff,
Believ'd, she then had reach'd it to an inch ;
“ Not yet, indeed !”—“ Well, well, I'll never
flinch ;
“ ’Twill do next time,” she strove, and (who will
wonder ?)
She strove her last, and fairly burst asunder.
The world abounds with creatures not more wise,
Still apeing those above their size.

The cit, whate'er his purse affords,
Must have, as fine a villa as my lord's.

The sheriff's lady thinks it right,
Her spouse addressing, should be dubb'd a knight.
In elder times, when folks were just as sage,
No titled dame could stir without her page.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—What is the vice condemned in this apologue ?

RESPONDENT.—An envious ambition.

2. EX.—Is there not a valuable quality of mind which is liable to be confounded with this vice ?

RES.—You mean emulation :—It is so.

3. EX.—Do young persons, stimulated by excellence in trying to equal or surpass those, who at present surpass them, fall under the condemnation of this fable ?

RES.—Not necessarily ; because emulation may and ought to exist without envious ambition.

4. EX.—How are we to distinguish one from the other ?

RES.—An enviously ambitious person feels uneasiness and pain at the success, or superiority of others, with whom he compares himself, and would rather hurt them, or even himself, as we see in the fable, than not equal or surpass his rivals.—An emulous youth feels only a generous desire of attaining, or surpassing some supposed point or degree of excellence in another, apart from all consideration of the person or circumstances of his rival.

5. Ex.—Would he then go so far, as to render services in his power to a rival, while endeavouring to emulate his virtues, or his talents ?

Res.—Yes, such I apprehend to be the generous spirit of emulation ; whereas an envious ambition discovers something of meanness, and often of malice.

6. Ex.—But are not emulations and envyings both condemned in scripture ?

Res.—They are both placed in an odious catalogue of sins and vices in the epistle to the Galatians (ch. 5, v. 19, 20, 21,) and, among the gentiles, generosity in contest, might perhaps so rarely have been seen, that emulation appeared but a lighter shade of envy.

7. Ex.—Yet does not St. Paul, in a passage addressed to the Corinthians, suppose, that emulation may sometimes be laudable ?

Res.—This may surely be inferred from his comparison of the Christian life to a race : “ know ye not that they, which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize ? *So run, that ye may obtain.*” Emulation is here advised, and regarded as a virtue ; nothing but the prize is kept in view, and no desire felt but that of being foremost in the race ; that is, foremost in the practice of Christian duties, without attending to any thing in the

persons or circumstances of competitors, according to the distinction made above between true emulation and envy.

8. Ex.—Do you suppose that, in our schools, emulation operates toward the attainment of excellence as strongly as reward or punishment?

Res.—More forcibly I believe, than either with disinterested and ingenuous spirits. Punishment indeed, or the fear of it, cannot be conceived to have any stronger influence than merely to incite to the avoidance of imputed faults: but though a mind ambitious of reward will proceed actively toward high attainments, an emulous spirit, while it conceives abstractedly higher ideas perhaps of excellence than the former, is powerfully and constantly stimulated, to surpass some very laudable measure of it, discovered in a competitor.

FABLE XXIII.

THE CROW, THE FOX, AND THE ROOK.

DAME Crow sat perch'd upon a tree,
While in her beak, she held a slice of cheese :
This morsel Reynard chanc'd to see ;
Nor fail'd it Reynard's liquorish taste to please.

Wishing the dainty nearer reach,
Much in this stile, he makes the dame a speech—

“ Good morrow, madam Crow
“ My eye-sight's blest, as here I sit below ;
“ To see so sweet a figure, and so dress'd ;
“ Alas ! it robs my heart of rest !
“ Now hear me (mind, I hate a lie :)
“ If, as your beauty strikes the eye,
“ Your voice's melody should charm my ear ;
“ No matter ever was so clear
“ As that o'er birds of song, you reign the Phoenix
here.”

At the wag's praise elated above measure,
Our Phoenix, riggling with excess of pleasure,
Opens her beak, and strains her throat,
To ravish Reynard with her note.

Down drops the cheese ;
Which Reynard laughing lost no time to seize.

A grave old Rook,* just passing by,
Turn'd on our dupe a pitying eye.
Seeing, she much had wanted an adviser,
Believ'd it neighbourly to try
A lesson, which she thought would suit her :
A word of truth might make her wiser,
And save, perchance, her breakfast slice in future.
“ Henceforth, good cousin, shew more sense,
“ And learn, 'tis ev'ry flatterer's rule,
“ Whene'er his cant has made a fool,
“ To live ; at least, to laugh at his expence.
“ If sober truth for once thy taste can please,
“ This may be worth a slice of cheese.”
Our bird, with native croak and face of rue,
Own'd, but too late, the observation true.

* The present fabulist flatters himself he has improved the plan of this apologue by introducing a third interlocutor, in order to remove the absurdity, apparently current from hand to hand, from Æsop's time till now, of making the Fox give a lesson to the Crow inconsistent with the roguish cunning of his character, and directly calculated to defeat his success in any future trial on the same silly gull. A successful flatterer must not be supposed, hastily to renounce practice in a profitable quarter.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—What ill consequence, beyond ridicule justly incurred, arises, according to this fable, from being deluded by flattery ?

RESPONDENT.—Sometimes, the loss of property.

2. EX.—But does a piece of cheese represent any serious article of property ?

RES.—It may represent every sort of property : we see those who listen to flatterers, every day inveigled into great embarrassments, and not unfrequently choused out of their estates.

3. EX.—Then, are not flattery, and dishonesty, synonymous terms ?

RES.—Not altogether, such ; but flattery is one species of dishonesty.

4. EX.—How do you define flattery ?

RES.—False compliments, or undeserved praise, given with a view to deceive.

5. EX.—Do those conventional phrases and compliments, which pass from one man to another in the common intercourse of life ; for instance, in the subscription of letters ; in the acknowledgment of very trivial favours ; in the meeting of friends and acquaintances, &c. ; do such conventional phrases

and compliments, it may be asked, fall under the definition of flattery?

RES.—Certainly not; they are a current coin, of which every body knowing the small value, no body is deceived by it.

6. Ex.—But why are they used, if they mean almost nothing?

RES.—To prevent a blunt, abrupt and ungracious manner of doing and saying things: a manner always disagreeably felt among well-educated persons.

7. Ex.—But do not titles and epithets of honour and dignity, namely, “my lord”—“your grace”—“the right honourable”—“the reverend”—“the worshipful,” when addressed to persons, whom we know to possess little dignity, honour, or personal worth, and sometimes none, fall within the definition of flattery?

RES.—No: they are only conventional like the phrases above alluded to; and being universally understood, as not addressed to the moral character of persons, but to their rank, station or office, the use of them involves no intention, or hazard of deceit.

8. Ex.—But does not our divine Law-giver say: “Let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay?”

RES.—He does ; but we must take the spirit of all his precepts rather than the letter : we shall, otherwise, confine their intended application, and make them useless in a thousand cases where they are meant to direct our conduct. This precept means, that affirmation or negation, on whatever subject, to which different words or phrases must be adapted according to their different nature, must be simply true and sincere, without equivocation or mental reservation.

9. Ex.—But what then meant our Saviour by adding “that whatsoever is more than these,” that is, than these words, “yea, yea, and nay, nay,” cometh of evil ?

RES.—Undoubtedly, that there would be no need, to confirm affirmation or negation by *voluntary* oaths, which would soon have the evil effect of destroying all confidence in the common forms of speech. The subject of swearing introduced the precept. See Matt. ch. 5. v. 34-5-6-7.

FABLE XXIV.

CÆSAR'S REWARD OF OFFICIOUSNESS.

THERE was at Rome a kind of creature,
For ever restless, ever out of breath ;
I know not, how I shall define his nature ;
One, who fatigued himself to death,
With doing nothing ; no one e'er obliging,
Yet every one he met besieging
With his Officiousness ; a whiffling elf
Of that unmeaning race,
That's every where, yet always out of place ;
A plague alike to others, and himself.
Phædrus ennui'd with often seeing
This idly-busy sort of being,
Aim'd to correct his folly by a story,
Which I will beg to lay before ye.
But first I make it a condition,
With each kind reader, howsoe'er discerning,
That he allow a small display of learning,
Upon the ancient mode of *manumission*.
This custom, should I fail to mention,
Since the most courteous reader may forget,
Or, possibly, not know it yet,
Our story might escape his apprehension.
“ When to a Roman slave was given

“ His freedom ;—to confirm that boon of Heaven,
“ From his lord’s hand with joy elate,
“ He craved a solemn blow upon his pate.”

Pray, gentle reader, note this intimation,
And I’ll proceed with my relation.

Cæsar, my author says, Tiberius,
One of shrewd wit, tho’ stern and serious,
Travelling to Naples, on his way
Desirous of repose,

Stops at Misenum for a day ;

Where on its top, as every scholar knows,

Lucullus built a country seat,

For air and sea views, his belov’d retreat.

Whilst Cæsar in the garden took his pleasure ;

Walk’d thro’ each alley, trod each verdant lawn,

Breathing the zephyrs of the dawn,

In silence musing at his leisure,

Darts sudden on his footsteps, a curl’d slave,

Whose proper duty ’twas, to wait

For errands at an outer gate.

His dress tucked up, the busy knave

Seizes a watering pot : at every turn,

For fear th’ imperial shoe should burn,

Or the least particle of dust

Excite his majesty’s disgust ;

Where’er he finds the royal eye,

But no where else, within a twinkling,

He falls a spouting and a sprinkling,
With, here, a drop, and, there, an inundation ;
Intruding on the Prince's privacy,
And fav'rite hour of meditation.

Tiberius guess'd from his condition,
These needless pains all aim'd at *manumission*.
When our officious spark again drew near,
Presenting with a grin, his forward pate,
The Prince exclaims : " my box o' th' ear,
" Cannot be purchased at so cheap a rate."

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—How do you distinguish officiousness from dutiful respect?

RESPONDENT.—As having only the appearance of either duty or respect, and that accompanied by an impertinent and interested assiduity, annoying the person to whom it is shewn.

2. EX.—Does officiousness specifically belong to the character of a slave.

RES.—Certainly not; though it oftener makes part of his character than that of a freeman.

3. EX.—Ought we at once to suppose it, to have made part of the characters of *Æsop* and *Phædrus*, who both were slaves?

RES.—Probably we ought not; but this is said without absolute decision: since moralists, though ever so clear sighted to the faults of others, do not always avoid them in their own practice.

4. EX.—Have superiors in title, rank, or condition, a right to the respect, or duty of their inferiors?

RES.—Undoubtedly a right by the spirit of society, which considers these distinctions, as among its main pillars: a right confirmed by divine sanction.

5. EX.—But have rank, title, and condition,

a just claim to respect or duty, apart from worth of character?

RES.—The distinctions themselves have ; though in this case, not the persons who bear them.

6. EX.—But is not the respect or duty, always addressed immediately to the person ?

RES.—Yes, it is so externally ; for the person is considered as the representative of those qualities, which the spirit of civil society courteously supposes, to have earned those distinctions. But while they are addressed to a person not deserving them, they are in fact paid only to his situation.

7. EX.—But is there not something feigned in this kind of respect ?

RES.—Not at all : it is a sincere respect to the situation ; but always conventionally addressed to the person. If he knows himself not to deserve it, he seems contented that the world apply it to his situation ; to which alone it belongs. If he is conscious of deserving it, he partakes it with his situation. External subjection, and the duties connected with it, can, no other way, be more sincerely shewn to the higher powers.

8. EX.—But to return to the intention of the fable, from which several of the preceding questions, though important, have but indirectly arisen ; would Tiberius, as a king, more properly have

punished the impertinent and interested officiousness of the slave, than by disappointing its aim?

Res.—Though officiousness so impertinent and troublesome, with a view to nothing but the slave's own interest, might have deserved corporal chastisement from any but a royal hand, it had been beneath the dignity of the Prince to inflict it. A king, unless personally assailed, cannot consistently with decorum, or the respect he owes himself, lift his hand in the punishment of a subject, or indeed of a fellow creature.

FABLE XXV.

THE EAGLE AND THE RAVEN.

ALTHOUGH my animals are gentle teachers,
And far from talking loud,
I'd wager I could point out preachers,
Who lecture worse the mighty and the proud.
These, would they listen to my fable,
Would find they're frequently unable,
To use the blessings they possess,
Whether of greater worth or less,
Without the counsel and assistance
Of those, to whom they teach their distance.
A potent Eagle, all despotic,
Refin'd in taste, perhaps exotic,
Trussing a Turtle in his claw,
Gave him an airing to his nest;
There destin'd to regale his maw;
But found upon arrival, though possess'd,
Of a delicious treat,
And a good appetite to eat,
The creature fearful of exposure,
Lock'd in a castle-like inclosure.
A Raven flying by that way,
Observed the case, and eyeing, with much pleasure,
The royal bird's convivial treasure,

He laugh'd to see him, 'midst his plenty, starving,
Merely for want of skill in carving :

And told the Eagle, he could break the spell,
And get the dainty from the shell ;

But his condition were at least,
An invitation to the turtle feast.

The Eagle thought there was enough ;
The terms met therefore no rebuff.

“ Now, says the Raven, take your flight ;

“ The creature in your talons lock,

“ And soaring till your out of sight,

“ Let fall your precious burthen on a rock ;

“ You'll quickly hear his armour crash ;

“ Descend and feast upon the calepash ;

“ The fins, green fat, and calapee,

“ Will serve extremely well for me.”

The Eagle listen'd to the sly old sinner ;

And posting to a proper elevation,

The scheme succeeds to admiration :

And lo ! our feather'd aldermen at dinner !

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—The last fable suggested some questions concerning respect and duty from inferiors to the great. What is the design of this?

RESPONDENT.—To teach, that gratitude is due from the great to their inferiors in return for the benefits they derive from the knowledge, talents, labours, and services of the latter.

2. EX.—Does not this apologue intimate, that the great may be so circumstanced as to be unable, either to enjoy, or to use their own possessions, without the assistance of their inferiors?

RES.—It does so, manifestly.

3. EX.—What is to be justly inferred from this, since the dependent state of the inferior classes of society, equally on the great, and on one another, is not to be denied?

RES.—That the dependence of the great on the inferior classes, and on one another, seems no less evident; and that, in all civil communities, men from the highest to the lowest condition, are, in some way or other, reciprocally dependent.

4. EX.—What virtue then, from this view of things, is for the happiness of mankind most imperiously called into practice?

RES.—That universal love of every son of Adam to his brother man—Christian charity.

5. EX.—Which of the human passions may we pronounce the most generally hostile to the happiness of mankind?

RES.—Pride; the passion, which universally predominates in every human breast, and confines a great deal too much of our love to ourselves.

6. EX.—Whence comes this universal dominion of pride, since it is a proverb in every mouth, that pride was not made for man?

RES.—To what but that ease, with which a slender line of boundary is ever over-stepped; that line, which sometimes just divides virtue from vice, and in the present case, pride from self-esteem? If self-esteem be not properly a virtue, it is at least a precious sentiment in the heart of man, and the foundation of almost every virtue.

7. EX.—Can then even humility itself, that necessary virtue, be founded on self-esteem?

RES.—Nothing more naturally. True humility would be but imperfectly practised without self-esteem. Where this is wanting, it is apt to degenerate into a superstitious, if not a self-tormenting abasement, which is often mistaken by fanatics for Christian sanctity. Nothing, however, of this sort, appears to have made part of the

character of any of the immediate disciples of a master, the most exemplary teacher of true humility ever known to the earth.

8. Ex.—In whom yet may this extreme self-abasement be considered as no fault ?

Res.—In every very wicked man in the first stages of a sincere repentance, and before his return to virtue and religion has received its confirmation from supernal grace.

9. Ex.—Whence shall this confirmation be known ?

Res.—By a total change of disposition and conduct from bad to good, which has actually taken place, and time has proved.

FABLE XXVI.

THE COCK AND THE JEWEL.

FINE things are often out of place ;
And this seem'd very much the case,
When once a Cock, a hungry spark,
Raking for breakfast on the dunghill straw,
Turn'd up a Jewel with his claw.
Well might he cry, " I've miss'd my mark !
" This glittering thing ; what is't ?—a pearl,
" Or diamond of superior water ?
" 'Twould grace the finger of an Earl,
" Or sparkle on the bosom of his daughter.
" But for myself, I really find
" A thing more suited to my mind,
" Nor think my labour half so vain,
" When I scratch up a single grain
" Of millet, or of humble barley :
" Nay, those stand higher in my estimation,
" If I may speak my judgment fairly ;
" Than all the Jewels in the nation."
When Phædrus met a dunce not able
To taste his wit, he bade him read our fable.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Is the tendency of this fable, as applied by Phædrus to criticism on subjects of taste, quite morally correct?

RESPONDENT.—It may, I think, well be doubted: for till the criterion of taste be universally fixed, it betrays a want of moral candour to stigmatize any one, as a fool, or dunce, who may, either from a supposed deficiency of taste, or intelligence in some particular province of art or genius, judge differently from ourselves; while in some other we, and perhaps the world in general, might have reason to hold his judgment and knowledge in the highest estimation. The lapidary, or the court lady would, it is likely, from conventional prejudice or fancy, as much as from any thing that could be pronounced a just principle of taste, prefer a diamond or a pearl, to a grain of barley. But the husbandman, that should prefer a grain of wheat or barley to diamonds or pearls, putting the arbitrary value in money, set upon the latter, out of question, would have nine-tenths of the world on his side to one, who would give a preference to the jewels.

2. Ex.—But, to confine my questions here to

the subject of fables,—by what, or by whose authority, are we to determine, as some persons are inclined, that fables written for instance in the concise manner of Phædrus, or of Æsop his model, are, merely in the light of works of genius, to be preferred to those written more diffusely composed in the manner of La Fontaine?

RES.—It is admitted, there are two parties on this question; but who will pretend an authority to determine it. It seems more candid and reasonable to suppose, that each manner may have equal merit, as addressed to different classes of readers.

3. Ex.—To what class do you think may be addressed most properly fables, in the concise manner of Æsop and Phædrus?

RES.*—Writers, who think young children capable of understanding the moral intention under the allegory of fables, will probably adopt the concise manner with more success. For since a short apologue will more easily be learnt by heart than a long one, it will have the better chance at least of being entirely understood by being frequently brought before the learner's mind. To young gentlemen, in our grammar schools, Æsop

* See the Introduction on this topic.

and Phædrus are, on different accounts, advantageously recommended.

4. Ex.—By what classes of readers are fables, in the diffuser manner of La Fontaine, perused with more advantage and pleasure?

RES.—By young persons approaching adolescence, as not being liable to mistake their meaning, at the same time that they are likely to be more entertained; and probably by readers in general, farther advanced, whether to manhood or old age; who, having had a wider scope of observation and experience, will be pleased with those natural and characteristic circumstances with which, he, and his best imitators, describe the actors and enliven the action of their fables; thus frequently giving them an interest in proportion to their length.

5. Ex.—But is not Phædrus admired, by all classical readers at least, for his sententious brevity, and the simplicity and neatness of his Latin stile?

RES.—Yes, and very justly; and the more so, as being a native of Greece, that he should, at the same time, have acquired the idiomatic stile of conversation, such as probably was used in the Court of Augustus; where he lived, after being brought from Macedonia by that Emperor's father, Octavius.

6. Ex.—But excepting the article of sententious

brevity, inconsistent with La Fontaine's manner of narrating, does not the Frenchman in his own language possess all the other characteristics of Phædrus's stile in their full perfection?

RES.—That at least will surely be admitted in his favour by all, who are much, or equally conversant with both languages. Besides that the graceful “*Naivete*” so much admired in La Fontaine, and that much more the character of his genius and disposition, than of the language he wrote in, has always given a peculiar charm to his fables.

7. Ex.—Is not his stile in verse, what Madame de Sevigne's is in prose; and are not both, with the happiest effect, adapted to the familiar narration of fables, tales, and lively stories and incidents in letters and conversation?

RES.—Critical readers in general are, I believe, of this opinion, who find the stile of our British fabulists, Gay and Moore, and some others, in one stiff unvaried measure, often swelling into the language and transpositions of serious poetry; so as to lose the natural and sprightly grace of easy and familiar narration.

8. Ex.—Who among our English authors of tales and fables, in verse, are reckoned to have succeeded best in their stile and manner?

RES.—Mathew Prior; Bob Lloyd, as he was commonly called; Hall, the friend of Sterne; and those of the present day, Mrs. Barbauld, Lewis, G. Ellis, and some others, whose names are invidiously omitted, but not recollected, or perhaps unknown to me.

FABLE XXVII.

THE LION AND ASS A HUNTING.

THE Lion's appetite more keen and hearty
Than usual on a summer's morning,
He ask'd the Ass to share his hunting party,
That he might take advantage of his horning ;
But bade him screen himself behind the bushes,
Whene'er he raised his pipe.

Orders observed, for business ripe ;
Loud brays the Ass : and out there rushes
Each, from his lurking hole, affrighted
Beast after beast :

—His majesty delighted,
Kill'd all he liked, and made a dainty feast.
The Lion, thus regaled, had filled his maw,
And rested after dinner on his paw.

This was the moment for an Ass to speak :

“ An't please your majesty,
“ Pray, did you think your huntsman's horn too
weak ?”

“ Weak ? said the Lion, smiling graciously ;

“ Had I not known your family and kin,

“ And seen that perking length of ear,

“ When the woods echo'd with your horrid din,

“ I, like the rest, had scamper'd off for fear.”

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Is it not difficult to say, what point of moral instruction is aimed at in this fable?

RESPONDENT.—Indeed, it seems not easy.

2. Ex.—A great man might be represented availing himself of some frightful, or disgraceful quality in an inferior, in order to excite terror, or aversion, on some occasion or other, for his own purposes; but can that have been the main drift of the fable?

Res.—I think not.

3. Ex.—But can you discern nothing wrong in our Asinine huntsman's doubting the efficacy of his horn, after it had been so visibly instrumental to the success of the chase?

Res.—There was surely some appearance of affected humility in the Ass's expression of doubt on this occasion; and something too bordering on a contemptible kind of vanity, in wishing to found a title to applause on a property so odious and disagreeable, as to have excited nothing but terror and disgust.

4. Ex.—Do you think these conclusions fairly collected from the Lion's praise?

RES.—I do ; since its ironical humour conveys the most pointed sarcasm.

5. Ex.—But would you rather term the Ass's ambitious fatuity moral turpitude, or moral infirmity ?

RES.—Surely, the latter.

6. Ex.—Should not then the Lion's generosity of nature have rather inclined him to pity, than to ridicule infirmity ?

RES.—We may suppose, it would have done so, had the infirmity been unaccompanied by affectation ; which, wherever discovered, is a fair subject for ridicule.

FABLE XXVIII.

THE OWL AND THE GRASSHOPPER.

HAVE you not known that sort of man,
Whose only pleasure is to plague you ?
And tho' you shun him, how you can,
Who yet sticks by you like an ague.
But serious mischiefs oft this humour catch,
And the fool's malice more than meets his match.
Hard by the nest of that sagacious fowl,
Minerva's favourite, the Owl,
A teasing Grasshopper was wont to sit,
Whose sole amusement, and delight,
It was, by day and oft by night,
In chirpings shrill, to play the wit
At the sagacious bird's expence ;
Only for want of common sense.
“ Methinks you lead a very doltish life,
“ To rise, when other birds are gone to bed ;
“ But Mice, perhaps, are then most rife,
“ And those, who look so comely, are well fed.”
When morning dawn'd, and to her hollow tree,
The Owl return'd and thought of sleeping ;
There was the Grasshopper, still keeping
The same shrill strain ;
As pert, as ever, and as free.

The Owl begg'd silence oft in vain :
At each request the Grasshopper again,
In means of molestation rich,
But rais'd his pipe to higher pitch.
The Owl at length in deep despair,
Seeing the vanity of prayer,
Fatigued and vex'd, with eye-lids blinking,
But not once closed in sleep, was thinking;
How he might hit upon redress.
'Twixt sleep and waking, fancy often teems
With a variety of schemes :
And one arose, which promised good success.
" Your voice and wit, she cries, no doubt,
" To all the world must clearly point you out
" A fav'rite pupil of the god of song.
" Charm'd as I am, I bid adieu to rest,
" And fain would have you for my guest.
" You wits like nectar; come along ;
" This is your moment to be blest.
" Minerva listens, when I chuse to ask,
" And from Olympus lately dropp'd a flask."
The Grasshopper, quite parch'd with thirst,
And with the Owl's high compliment elated,
No second invitation waited ;
Hopp'd off at once, and reach'd the hollow first.
The Owl came close behind ; his captive seiz'd,
Devour'd him ; sunk to rest ; and woke appeas'd.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—The morality of this fable appearing questionable in more points than one, I would ask, what they are?

RESPONDENT.—In the extreme severity of the Grasshopper's punishment; in the Owl's insidious artifice to get the insect into her power, and the ill example of taking vengeance into her own hands.

2. Ex.—But should we not examine the points of view, in which the two antient fabulists probably regarded the conduct of our animal actors in this apologue, before we accuse them of teaching immoral lessons?

Res.—Justice, surely, requires it.

3. Ex.—Considering now the character of the Owl, as a creature of retired habits, wishing to indulge her slumbers in peace, and giving no offence to the Grasshopper, do not these circumstances give the appearance of unprovoked outrage to the Grasshopper's behaviour?

Res.—This may be granted; and farther, that such conduct deserved severe chastisement; but the punishment of death is beyond all proportion to the offence.

4. Ex.—Does not this objection lie against

many a penal law under governments renowned for their wisdom ?

RES.—Yes ; but that plea will as little defend the fabulist, as prove the justice of such governments in the case alledged. The fabulist is professedly a teacher of strict morality ; of which justice is one cardinal rule ; and that too, to which law-givers always pretend a strict conformity.

5. Ex.—Well ; conceding this point, yet, since in order to inflict a proper punishment, the culprit must be apprehended, I would ask, how can you blame the Owl for using the means in her power for this purpose ?

RES.—If such an insidious bait, as the Owl used, were the only practicable means, perhaps the necessary course of executive justice might defend it ; but the fabulist might surely have suggested means less exceptionable.

6. Ex.—Though the spirit of this proceeding was insidious, is the Owl to be supposed guilty of falsehood in telling the Grasshopper, she had nectar to give her ?

RES.—Not at all : for the Owl, being mythologically called Minerva's favourite bird, might, without any violence to truth, be supposed occasionally to receive a boon at the hands of her mistress : her insidious use of it is all we object to.

7. Ex.—But to come to the last article of censure on the fabulists, respecting this apologue : since the Grasshopper is placed by nature in no subjection to the Owl, if he were only to be considered as her fellow subject in the animal creation, should not the fabulists have suggested some tribunal, before which he might have been legally cited by the Owl for sentence on his misdemeanor?

RES.—This indeed appears the only way, to have prevented the immoral example of taking vengeance into her own hands.

8. Ex.—What are we then to conclude upon this fable?

RES.—That all it teaches ought not to be learnt, except the general intimation, that crimes ought to be punished; much too trite a precept to need inculcation through the ingenious medium of fable.

9. Ex.—Why do you suppose then, the present fabulist, chose to offer this fable to the perusal of young persons?

RES.—To put them by these questions on their guard against the wrong lessons sometimes undesignedly conveyed by very popular fabulists. Several instances of this inadvertency in Gay are not wanting.

FABLE XXIX.

THE WOLF AND THE CRANE.

HE, who, through avarice or folly tempted,
Ventures a service; that may risk his head,
Must not from evil think to 'scape exempted;
Nor much to wonder will he need,
Howe'er successful be the deed,
Should he be ill repaid!

A rav'nous Wolf

In too much hurry to devour his prey,
Lodg'd in his throat, tho' wide enough the gulf,
An awkward bone, which should have pass'd that
way.

'Thro' all the bestial neighbourhood

Howling he ran with piteous moan;

Begging some tenant of the wood

To play the surgeon in his case;

And then, with rueful face,

“To him, says he, who plucks the bone

“I promise my regard,

“Besides a lucrative reward.”

To undertake the bus'ness each is loth;

Each meditates excuse;

Till all at length refuse.

He then confirms his promise with an oath,

Which tempts a foolish interested Crane,
To risk his head within the murd'rous lane.
Success, however, crowns the operation,
And he of course demands his recompence.

“What recompence? You're merry on th' occasion,
“Or, else of gratitude you want all sense,”
Th' insulting caitiff said;

“'Tis recompence enough to save your head.”

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—What are we taught by this apologue, to avoid in the example of the Crane?

RESPONDENT.—The folly of running into manifest danger for the sake of gain.

2. Ex.—But, from what was the Crane to conclude it might be dangerous, to render the Wolf the assistance he so earnestly sought?

RES.—From the natural cruelty and rapacity of the Wolf, and his general bad character, which made all promises, whether upon his honour or his oath, equally suspicious and dangerous to be trusted.

3. Ex.—But, applying the case to mankind, an important question remains; whether Christian charity ought, in such imminent distress, to risk a great probability of personal safety?

RES.—Nothing can oblige one man to put his own life into very probable hazard, to save that of another: for this were to disobey the prime law of nature, self-preservation.

4. Ex.—Is there any circumstance, yet unnoticed in the fable, supposing the Crane disposed to have given his assistance from a motive of charity instead of covetousness, that could have led him

to question, whether he should risk his own life, in attempting the service desired?

RES.—Yes; the apprehension of danger manifested by every other creature, refusing assistance, as it was undoubtedly on the ground of the Wolf's ill character, and their unanimous opinion on the risk of complying.

5. Ex.—But ought we to conclude the Crane at all justified, since we see, he was safe at last, though abused and unrewarded?

RES.—Certainly not: we ought never to judge the merit of any person, or action, from events; the absolute certainty of which being always veiled in futurity, leaves the merits of our conduct to be determined solely by its real motive; and that, in the case before us, was the Crane's avarice.

FABLE XXX.

THE SENSIBLE ASS.

A PEDLAR went to catch his Ass,
Who spent his leisure time at grass ;
When he discover'd, looking round him,
An army of his country's foes :
They march in formidable rows,
And at first sight confound him.
Our Pedlar, knowing well, what ills environ
The man, who meddles with cold iron,
Relish'd no loitering in the field,
To brave the dangers of a battle,
Or hear the clash of swords on helmets rattle.
Ready at once his ground to yield,
He mounts his donkey in a flurry,
And bangs his sides, to intimate his hurry.
The Ass demanding what occasion,
To use this great precipitation ;
His master answers, " To be sure,
" By flight our safety to secure ;
" Hence must we soon be distant far,
" Or else we're prisoners of war."
The Ass replies ; " but e'er I move the faster,
" Pray tell me, should I change my master,
" Will the vile pauniers, or the galling pack,

- “ Be oftener laid upon my back ?
“ Will these poor bones be less in requisition,
“ Or shall I live in worse condition ?”
“ Nor worse, nor better,” says the Clown ;
“ If that, cries Donkey, be the case,
“ I shall jog on my wonted pace ;
“ For you, yourself, will surely own,
“ It matters not my master’s name,
“ If still my hardships be the same.”

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—The Ass makes a much better figure in this apologue than in his hunting party with the Lion ; but what do you think of the conduct of his master ?

RESPONDENT.—That, in requiring the Ass to change his characteristic sobriety of movement, on a pretence of the creature's welfare being equally endangered with his own, he made a selfish and false representation of the case.

2. Ex.—Does the moral of the fable turn wholly on that point ?

RES.—Not wholly.

3. Ex.—What further instruction is designed in it.

RES.—In the Ass's conclusion, the fabulist intimates, that there is no wisdom in a man's changing his conduct, where no reasonable motive appears for it.

FABLE XXXI.

THE CHILD AND THE SCHOOLMASTER.

My fable represents a foolish case ;

Remonstrance out of time and place.

A Child, too near the Thames, one day

Unluckily fell in, at play.

Some willows hanging o'er the river's brink,

By grace of Providence, he caught a twig ;

But had strength fail'd him, still might sink.

A prating Pedant, bluff and big,

The tyrant of a petty school, pass'd by :

“ Help, help, pray save me, or I die,”

The infant's ceaseless cry,

Struck, from the first, the Pedant's ear :

He turn'd, and drew deliberately near.

Then, with a magisterial twang,

Broke silence in a set harangue.

“ A pretty blockhead, thou ! a careless imp !

“ And weaker, in this element,

“ Than prawn, or shrimp.

“ By what ill fate wast hither sent,

“ T' expose thyself to such disasters,

“ The plague, alike, of parents, and of masters ?

“ Is not a fine employment theirs, whose task

“ It is, to guard the footsteps, let me ask,

“Of all such graceless elves ;
“Born, one would swear, but to destroy themselves !”
This furious, well-timed, bluster o’er ;
He drags the half-drown’d infant on the shore.
In great abundance flies the game,
At which the fabulist takes aim.
Yes, every censor, pedant, prater, scold,
(A thriving race too numerous to be told)
May in this story see his picture.
On all occasions, whether small or great,
Their only object is a theme for prate.
Could ye, my praters ! listen, I’ve a stricture
Suggested by the fable, which may teach
A lesson, worth your learning, each !—
“Snatch me from danger, and then make your
speech.”

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—What ought to be the conduct of any one, who sees a fellow creature in such imminent danger as the unfortunate infant in the fable ?

RESPONDENT.—Doubtless to give the most immediate assistance in his power.

2. EX.—How would you characterize the speech, which the School-master here stands to make, while he sees the Child's danger ?

RES.—As absurd, unseasonable, and cruel.

3. EX.—The fabulist having pointed out censorious persons, pedants, praters, and scolds, all as rather seeking occasion to talk than to give their help or sober advice in cases of accident, distress, or necessity, which of the characters here specified should you suppose most likely to merit this reflection ?

RES.—It is difficult to determine between the manifest prominence of the pedant and prater ; one so fond of talking, to shew his knowledge, in, or out of season ; and the other not less so, only to shew how much he has to say for himself, according to the vulgar ambition, or humour of praters.

FABLE XXXII.

THE APE AND THE DOLPHIN.

THE Greeks, whene'er they went to sea,
Took with them jugglers, dogs, and apes on board.
At Athens, or in that vicinity,

A vessel, once, thus oddly stor'd,
Was shipwreck'd; and 'tis said,
The crew had sunk but for the Dolphin's aid.

That gentle fish, the friend of man,
As Pliny says, (and who can doubt it?

None but an infidel would scout it)
Assists him in distress, where'er he can.

An Ape avail'd himself, on this occasion,

Of his resemblance to our kind;

And, in the Dolphin's friendly inclination,

His safety hoped to find.

The Dolphin, taking him for one of us,

Plac'd the Ape gravely on his back.

Whoe'er had seen him mounted thus,

And borne so swimmingly upon his back,

Far as appearances, he might rely on,

Had, perhaps, fancied him Arion.*

* Arion, a musician and poet of Lesbos, said to be saved by a dolphin.

The Dolphin, nearly got to land,
By chance demanded, whence his rider came ?
Wishing at first to understand,
Whether from Athens 'twas :—" Yes, yes;
" I'm known to every body there,
" And should you have some nice affair,
" Perhaps you'll find it not amiss
" To claim my services ; for my relations
" There occupy the highest stations :
" I'm cousin to the mayor."

The Dolphin could not fail to stare.

" Then the Piræus must, no doubt,
" The honour of your presence share ?"
" Yes, every day ; I scarce stir out,
" Be it alone, or with my wife,
" Without a call on friend Piræus,
" Who's always very glad to see us ;
" An honest fellow on my life !"

I need not say how much the Dolphin wonder'd,
While thus his boasting rider blunder'd ;
Whose tongue so fast before his knowledge ran,
He took the port of Athens for a man.
Our fish now turning up a keener eye,
From top to toe surveys the Ape,
And takes a nicer measure of his shape :
For he had found no further need to try
The least exertion of his pains,

To ford the shallows of th' impostor's brains.
Perceiving now, a beast was all his freight,
He plunges back into a wave ;
And, eased his shoulders of a worthless weight,
He seeks some ship-wreck'd mariner to save.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Where does the character of the Ape in this fable find its resemblance among men?

RESPONDENT.—In that of the lying impostor.

2. EX.—Since that character is but too common among men, how is it, the Dolphin is made to conclude that he had not carried a man but a beast upon his back?

RES.—The fabulist means, that persons, characteristically liars and impostors, fall so far short of the dignity of their human nature, that they may be considered, as nothing better than *apes of men*.

3. EX.—But when the Dolphin had brought the Ape so near to land, and plunged him again into the sea, was he not wanting in that benignity of disposition attributed to him by naturalists?

RES.—By no means: for they suppose the Dolphin's kindness and partiality to be confined to the human species.

4. EX.—Say, how the fable would have lost its moral, if the Dolphin had acted otherwise?

RES.—Because its intended lesson of instruction is to warn the paltry tribe of liars and impostors, that they may meet the punishment they deserve.

FABLE XXXIII.

THE TWO DOGS.

VIRTUES and Vices, birds of diff'rent feather,
Full oft, behold we, flock together :
The virtues, tho' by Nature so allied,
Croud not, unmingled, side by side.
Marco has prudence, not without a dash
Of mean self-love : his heart's too cold.
Of his next neighbour's valour, if you're told,
In the same breath, you hear he's rude, or rash :
Thus brass, or tin, still mingle in your cash.
'Mong animals, the Dog is he,
Whose boasted merit is fidelity.

But let him eye your soup or mutton,
Instant behold the sot, or glutton !
Two Mastiffs stand, at distance, noting
A dead Ass, on the river's surface floating,
Which wind and current both unite.
In bearing almost out of sight.

"A mist, cries one, my eyesight strangely dims,
"Or yonder some dead ox, or racer swims."

"I care not which, replies his brother,
"Metlinks at least, it looks like meat :
"So 'tis but something fit to eat,
"I care not, whether one, or t'other."

“ The only point of consequence with me,
“ (And here you’ll hardly disagree)
“ Is, since the stream’s so deep and wide,
“ How we shall ever stem the tide.
“ Let us then, since we both are dry,
“ And liquids we know how to sup,
“ Boldly the quantity defy,
“ And drink the river fairly up.
“ Yon carcase then you’ll see on land,
“ And a week’s dinners at command.”

Behold these creatures, stupidly unthinking,
Slaves of desire, proceed to drinking :
Soon swell’d and panting both for breath,
With monstrous greediness accurst,
They ceased not drinking till they burst,
And their mad fancy ended but with death.

’Tis thus with men, (O ! may our fable shame ’em)
Let but some object once inflame ’em,
Tho’ ’tis impossible to gain it,
The fancy takes, and they’ll maintain it ;
’Threaten what may, to make ’em rue it,
They still determine to pursue it :
What projects, vows, and supplications,
But to procure themselves vexations !
One, wildly wishing to controul the fates,
Sighs but to treble his estates.
A pauper hopes, nor argues worse,

Wanting all means, to fill his purse.
A third to reason bids defiance,
And with the rage of knowledge burning,
Conceives the easy task of learning
All hist'ry, languages, and science :
Who shall such heads from lunacy deliver ;
All aiming to drink up the river ?

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Though the proverbial fidelity of these animals often meets, in them, the good qualities of vigilance, gratitude, affection for their masters and courage in their defence ; this may be supposed to happen from chance or instinct, and not in them from any moral connection between these virtues and fidelity ; but in mankind there are several virtues, which seem to have a moral and almost natural alliance with fidelity ; what are they chiefly ?

RESPONDENT.—The love of our neighbour ; disinterestedness ; discretion ; strict vigilance in the concerns of others ; fortitude in resisting temptation to wrong them to our own advantage ; prudence and order in our own affairs ; and in general, a superior command of our own passions.

2. Ex.—But what, directly, may be learnt from the story of this fable ?

Res.—That this virtue of fidelity may subsist with occasional instances of great extravagance and absurdity.

3. Ex.—But will not even these be most commonly such as are less injurious to others than to the man of fidelity himself ?

RES.—The instance in the fable is certainly of that kind, and such perhaps as general experience may have found.

4. Ex.—But what is the direct scope of this fable?

RES.—To shew, that inordinate appetites, or violent passions, in defiance of the plainest common sense, will sometimes prompt impossible means of gratification.

FABLE XXXIV.

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY RAT.

A CITY Rat, of higher station,
Invites his rural friend to dine ;
Puts on the card of invitation,
A hint of Ortolans—the hour was nine.
A Turkey carpet, nicely spread,
The covers of each course receive ;
And heartily these cronies fed
At such a treat, you'll easily believe.
The Citizen, a rat of taste,
Brought all his niceties to table.
Now, tho' to rise appear'd no haste,
To sit out the desert, they prov'd unable.
At the hall door some noise was made,
Like grating hinges ; loud, yet hollow.
Quick scampers off the city blade,
Nor lags an inch his country guest, to follow.
The noise subsides ; they venture back ;
“ Come, says the master of the feast,
“ I doubt you're still upon the rack,
“ But stay, my friend, let's crack our nuts at
least.”
That finish'd ; says our country guest,
“ To-morrow come and dine with me ;

- “ But note, plain dinners suit us best,
“ Us country folks ; and mind, we dine at three.
“ Expect no Ortolans with us,
“ On t’other hand, no town alarms.
“ Adieu ! we’ve no such noise ; no fuss—
“ They’d rob my lord mayor’s turtle of its charms.”

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—What do we learn from this fable?

RESPONDENT.—That in scenes of life which make but little shew, there is generally to be found greater safety and tranquillity.

2. Ex.—But since most men prefer quiet and security to alarm and danger, both prudentially considered, whence is it, that such multitudes, in their passage through life, are frequently embarking in projects; and placing themselves in situations attended with alarm and danger?

RES.—Because the desire, natural to man, of bettering his condition, is a stronger principle than his love of peace and safety.

3. Ex.—In educating man to sustain a respectable part in society, is it wiser to foster this stronger principle, or to strengthen the weaker one?

RES.—Since it must be with design, that either principle has been implanted in the breast of different individuals by the Author of nature, it should seem best in every system of education, to leave each principle to its own operation upon human conduct.

4. Ex.—But to keep the character of the two

principles in question more in sight, we will call one an ambitious spirit, and the other, a contented love of quiet and safety ; I would then ask, since we often see the ambitious spirit carrying men with the most daring rashness into situations of alarm and danger, in order to atchieve some action of éclât, or to gain some point they deem important, whether it should make no part of education to check this disposition of youth, when it appears in their state of pupilage ?

RES.—It is true, that in after life we sometimes witness these daring and hazardous effects of this disposition ; but as they are often attended, and particularly in war, with signal benefit to the country of such citizens, it should seem wisest to make it no direct object of education, to tame this adventurous spirit.

5. Ex.—May it not be done at least indirectly ?

RES.—Since both historical and moral reading make an essential part in every liberal system of instruction, no youth can be without knowledge of the consequences of an inordinate spirit of ambition, and he may therefore be left to his own reflection upon them. Thus far education cannot fail to bear generally and *indirectly* upon the case.

6. Ex.—But, on the other hand, may not the contented love of quiet, and security in youth,

prove an obstacle to such efforts in manhood, as may be necessary for the maintenance of their original station in life?

RES.—This tamer character will have as much advantage from the impressions of historical and moral instruction as the other. It may be added, that, under the influence of these opposite dispositions, young persons are generally led, where the choice is given them, to chuse that profession, vocation, or situation in life, for which Nature has best fitted them, and in which they are likeliest to fulfil, respectively, their proper duties.

7. EX.—Then your conclusion, on comparing the different lives and situations of the Town and Country Rat seems to be this—that no general or decided preference ought to be given of one to the other?

RES.—It is: for since society could not subsist without its different states and conditions, it is surely fittest, that different men should be so constituted, as to find their happiness, and to perform their duties, in them all.

FABLE XXXV.

THE WOODMAN AND DEATH.

A POOR old Woodman, smother'd with his load,
And bent beneath his fagot's weight,
Went slowly trudging on the road,
Much wearied with his freight.
The chimney corner of his cot once more,
Not distant far, he labours hard to gain;
But quite exhausted, finds the labour vain,
Flings down his load, and counts his mis'ries o'er.
“ On hardships, woes and penury hurl'd,
“ Have I known pleasure in this world !
“ With work scarce earning daily bread,
“ Morn brings me cares, and night no sure repose :
“ A brawling wife, whose frowns I dread,
“ Children ill-taught, nor better fed,
“ The ceaseless plagues my sad condition knows !
“ While taxes on provisions feeding,
“ Double their price, that weighs like lead,
“ New calls on poverty are ever breeding.
“ With all these evils, at eternal strife,
“ Behold ! nor overcharged, the picture of my
 life !”
He calls for Death ; who, ever near,
Fail'd not that moment to appear.

Of the decrepid mourner he demands,
What 'twas he wished for at his hands.
“A trifle—I won’t trouble you to stay;
“Just, help me with my load up,—and away!”
When Death appears our ills to cure,
We find them easy to endure;
“Better to suffer, than to die,”
Is Nature’s universal cry.*

* The reader will find this sentiment of Fontaine particularly examined in the questions.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Does not Fontaine's reflection, delivered in the formal stile of a maxim in the two concluding lines of this fable, deserve reprobation ?

RESPONDENT.—Surely it must in the eyes of any Christian moralist.

2. Ex.—May not death, to persons prepared for it by a well-spent life, be, in many cases, preferable to a state of great suffering ?

RES.—I am much inclined to think so.

3. Ex.—Can you enumerate a few such cases ?

RES.—It being remembered that, in this question, the preparation of a good life is always supposed, death, not to mention the incurable maladies of old age, to a person incessantly tormented with the gout or the stone ; to one corroded by a lingering cancer ; to another in a state of slavery under a cruel master ; to a third under imprisonment for life, or in absolute want of bread to satisfy hunger ; and to many, perhaps innumerable other objects,—death I say, as an alternative, would most sincerely be preferred to life under an unremitted sensation of any of these, or equal sufferings.

4. Ex.—But does not this conclusion militate against the law of self-preservation ?

RES.—Not at all; since a good man can never forget this prime law of his nature, be his sufferings whatever they may; for be his preference of death ever so decided, he thinks himself indispensably obliged, to take food or medicine to sustain life, and to resign himself wholly to the will of God.

5. Ex.—Do you then suppose all, who commit suicide, unless in a state of insanity, to be positively bad men?

RES.—They are undoubtedly so far at least very wicked; for the act itself is as much murder, as if committed on another, and it is more desperate in its consequences to the self-murderer, inasmuch as it precludes the possibility of repentance.

6. Ex.—But, apart from this crime, were we to suppose him a bad man even in the sight of God; do you conceive his former life would prevent his condemnation at the last tribunal?

RES.—Christians have no authority to admit, that an unrepented crime will escape condemnation.

7. Ex.—But can a man, positively good, in a Christian sense, were he supposed to forget the law of self-preservation, be conceived guilty of the crime of suicide under any circumstances but that of insanity

RES.—I think not ; because his religion will enable him to support any degree of misfortune or misery with fortitude ; and as a good man, he cannot but resort to it.

8. Ex.—Does not the fabulist seem to suppose old age a greater burthen in poverty, than in a state of prosperity ?

RES.—The choice of his soliloquist from the former state may have been quite accidental.

9. Ex.—But I would ask, in whether of these opposite states is old age probably the less tolerable ?

RES.—Putting all extraordinary cases out of the question on either side, and considering it generally, I answer, that while from the poor man, in old age, death can take nothing but the mere necessities of life, and its natural pleasures and best affections, it takes all these from the opulent man, together with all his imaginary satisfactions and factitious enjoyments. With death, then, very frequently in view, as it must be to all old persons, the prosperous man feels the pressure of weightier loss and stronger regrets, as the companion of his thoughts in declining life, and probably, therefore, of the two finds old age the more burthensome.

FABLE XXXVI.

THE LION GOING TO WAR.

THE Lion once, like Bonaparte,
With appetite for war most hearty,
(The plea, no matter what to him,
Offence, convenience, or whim)
Conceived new projects of ambition
On his next neighbour, or some state at distance.
From ev'ry rank, from each condition,
He calls forth levies for assistance.
To ev'ry one in council, was assign'd
Such office, post or station,
As suited best his character, or parts,
His courage; or his skill in warlike arts ;
That in the Lion's army each might find
His proper occupation.
Be sure the Elephant was plac'd
In th' ordnance; and with weighty hoof
For trampling form'd, he would not stand aloof,
If in the front of battle plac'd.
In rude assault fierce Bruin was to share ;
His province still to play the Bear ;
And Reynard knew the *ruses de guerre*.
Why should the Monkey throw away his tricks ?
An enemy must sometimes be amused ;

The Monkey, therefore, with rest might mix ;

Nor could with prudence be refused.

Thus in his element was each disposed :

When lo ! before the council closed,

Some member said : “ ’Twere better to admit

“ No coward hares ; and still less fit

“ My judgment deems the long-ear’d race,

“ Among the troops to find a place.

“ Reject ’em both for worthless cattle ;

“ Both sure to fail us in the day of battle.”

“ Forbear, the Lion cries, to flout ’em ;

“ Our army’s not complete without them.

“ I’ve mark’d for each his proper post :

“ Donkey for trumpeter we’ll take ;

“ His bray may terrify th’ opposing host.

“ Puss a fleet messenger will make ;

“ And each fit talent for his place may boast.”

Through all varieties of mind or feature,

Wise monarchs thus the character will learn,

And in each individual creature

Some talents or abilities discern ;

Such as to use by Nature tend,

Or wait a skilful hand to bend.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Whence comes that disposition we too often discern in ourselves, to overlook, or undervalue the abilities or talents of others ?

RESPONDENT.—It may arise from pride, envy, want of discernment, or carelessness.

2. EX.—But to which of these causes should you attribute it in a counsellor of like importance with him in the fable ?

RES.—Since from his situation in a council of war, he must be supposed a person of consequence, there seemed nothing to alarm either his pride or envy in the election of officers, &c.: he gave proof therefore of carelessness, or want of discernment.

3. EX.—But could blame fall upon him in both these cases ?

RES.—No : in that only of carelessness or inadvertence : the sovereign must blame himself who admits a person wanting discernment into his councils.

4. EX.—What virtues do you think the fabulist means chiefly to recommend to sovereigns in the example of the Lion ?

RES.—Humanity and justice : humanity, which should lead him to suppose some degree of worth in

every individual subject ; and justice, to weigh the merits of all, whom he may have opportunity to place in situations of utility or credit.

5. Ex.—Does this fable point to any thing farther than the duty of kings and their counsellors ?

Res.—It is an admonition to all persons, so stationed or circumstanced as to be called upon for their opinions of the characters and abilities of other men ; and inculcates the duties of candour and justice in the estimates we make of them.

FABLE XXXVII.

THE RAT AND THE ELEPHANT.

WITH Frenchmen, says a poet of their nation,

Not speaking of their sages,

To be stiled persons is not high enough :

They deem it unpolite and rough ;

Whatever be their station,

Not to be character'd as personages.

Our poet then, (and none more able)

Portrays the coxcombs in a fable.

A Rat, diminutive of size,

On a huge Elephant had fix'd his eyes ;

Smiles " at an animal three stories high,

" Yet doom'd some proud Sultana's hack,

" To bear her household on his back ;

" Lap dog, cat, paroquet and pye,

" Duenna too, her guardian sage,

" Dragging his load on holy pilgrimage."

The Rat was wond'ring to behold,

The crowds stand gaping at this mighty mass.

" Pray, what, if I may be so bold,

" Is it, good people, ye admire in him ?

" Is't, that ye deem the creature Nature's whim ;

" Or that, when children near him pass,

" You are amused, and call it fun,

“ To see, how frighten’d off they run ?

“ But, Sirs, I’d have you understand,

“ Altho’ he looks so lofty and so grand,

“ We Rats, but small of corporal dimensions,

“ Yield not, in consequence, to his pretensions.”

Our little personage’s speech

Happen’d Grimalkin’s ear to reach ;

Who gave him a convincing pat,

Which, spite of all his vanity and rant,

Taught him how soon a puny Rat,

May find himself no Elephant.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—The foregoing fable concerns the opinions we form of others ; what is the object of this ?

RESPONDENT.—The opinions we conceive of ourselves.

2. EX.—Are not all men prone to think too highly of themselves ?

RES.—Throughout the human race, there is probably no exception.

3. EX.—But is such extravagance as that of the Rat in the fable at all common ?

RES.—We are much inclined to suppose so. In our commerce with the world, what character do we more commonly meet with than that of a coxcomb ; a man, that is, who thinks too well of himself in every respect, and cannot help shewing it.

4. EX.—To what do such false opinions of ourselves lead ?

RES.—To ridiculous comparisons, which we make between ourselves and our superiors, like that in the fable.

5. EX.—Is this fault equal to that pointed out to censure in the last apologue ?

RES.—Certainly not : that leads to the serious

violation of humanity and justice towards other men : this generally, but to expose ourselves to the ridicule of the world.

6. Ex.—What then is imported by the Rat's meeting with his death in the midst of his foolish vaunting ?

Res.—It only means, that such an accident (for it was no more) was well adapted to give him, though too late, sufficient conviction of his folly and conceit.

7. Ex.—But do not such absurdity and extravagance deserve at least some punishment ?

Res.—Yes ; and persons guilty of them are continually meeting with it in the mortifications they experience from the ridicule and contempt of the world ; and which, happily, as they advance in age, not unfrequently work their cure.

FABLE XXXVIII.

THE POWER OF FABLE.

AT Athens once, as goes the story,
An Orator, and he no stranger
To that fam'd people, light and vain,
Seeing their state and all its glory,
On some great crisis, full of danger :
Their hearing at the forum sought to gain.
His matter weigh'd, and well composed ;
Each period musically closed ;
His voice high pitch'd, and free from twang,
Suppose him launch'd in his harangue ;
You'll scarce believe me, if I mention,
Th' assembly shew'd him no attention.
These his first efforts failing all to charm 'em,
He rais'd his voice, and thunder'd to alarm 'em :
Conjur'd them by the state's declining health,
And bade them tremble for the commonwealth :
Still no effect ! None listen'd yet !—
Our speaker now resolv'd to try
His rhet'ric's whole artillery :
Behold him, on his centre set,
Collected ; nor vouchsafes he once to ope
His mouth, but out there flies a trope :
This form'd to tickle ; that to lull ;

A third, to animate the dull.
But all in vain : none seem'd to mind ;
He did but whistle to the wind.
No party could he raise ; no faction ;
By force of words, or dint of action.
A wrestler's ring, or boxing match,
A mountebank, or boys at play,
Much sooner their attention catch :
Bent but on objects frivolous, or gay.
A thought at length our speaker's fancy struck :
Though much chagrined, much mortified,
He did not quite despair of luck,
At least before the thing was try'd.
Have ye e'er heard, he cries, that odd affair
About old Ceres, our Protector ?
If not, I think, 'twill make you stare ;
To do so strange a thing, you'd scarce expect her.
A journey, meaning once to take,
Her travelling companions would ye guess ?
A Swallow, and a Water Snake !
Nor strange the wonder you express.
It so fell out, the party soon discover
A river, traversing their way ;
So broad, not e'en a Goddess could hop over.
But neither Bird, nor Snake had need to stay,
Or of their time to risk a moment's loss ;
One flew, and t'other swam across.

But tell us, all exclaim, what Ceres did ?

Why friends ! she'd nothing else to do,
Than vent her rising wrath on you.

She wishes you severely chid :

She says, you're naughty children all,

And mindless of your fate,

To let your Orator unheeded call

Attention to the perils of the state ;

While yet a puerile fable could prevail

T' awaken all your curiosity :

Athens alone among the Greeks can fail,

To ask what Philip* may be doing,

Who seeks to rule their destiny,

And plots, from morn to night, their ruin.

Attention by his apologue recall'd,

Their Orator unheard no longer baul'd :

A strict observance now they paid

To every syllable he said.

Hence let no story-teller fail,

To sing the praise of apologue, or tale.

Hail Æsop ! Phædrus ! Mother Goose ! Fontaine !

When orators their arguments address

To folks, who pay them no attention,

In case they would not talk in vain,

And shine but little at invention ;

Let them our fables into service press,

Nor doubt a hearing in their cause to gain.

QUESTIONS, &c.

1. EXAMINER.—Whence is it, that fables and fictitious tales derive their power over the human mind?

RESPONDENT.—Not improbably, from the continual and quick succession of cause and effect which they exhibit; or, to express this matter morally, from the motives of action and the actions themselves always quickly succeeding each other in the little drama of a fable. Suspense, when not actually experienced in our own affairs, is not an unpleasant sensation; provided we are not long kept from the knowledge of some effect, event, or end proposed, and expected. In fables curiosity is scarcely sooner excited, than it is gratified.

2. Ex.—Does not this reason explain at the same time, why the attention of a volatile and impatient people, like the Athenians, is more easily caught by a tale, than a laboured oration with a long train of reasoning?

RES.—Yes; the case of the Athenians seems thus naturally explained.

3. Ex.—But how will you account for the same effect being wrought on the Romans by the famous apologue of *the belly and members* in the

hands of Menenius Agrippa, although the Roman character was marked neither by volatility, nor impatience?

RES.—This instance does not contradict the explanation above given. There are moments at least, in which all nations resemble each other; particularly in those of their public political assemblies. Subjects of peculiar interest on those occasions excite a spirit of enquiry, and kindle warm expectation, and sometimes cause tumultuous movements. Decision is then waited for impatiently, through a long series of reasoning on both sides a question; and happy is the speaker, who, by an apposite story or apologue, can relieve the dryness of argument, and inspire patience and good humour enough, to obtain a fair hearing at last.

4. EX.—Has not this expedient, so successfully and often judiciously resorted to by men of wit and imagination in our houses of parliament, and also at the bar, been somewhat rashly tried in the pulpit?

RES.—Yes, by a certain tribe of extempore self-ordained preachers, and with success too in addressing themselves to a class of hearers of their own low order in society.

5. EX.—Why has it then been so little adopted by preachers of the established church?

RES.—Few of correct judgment or elegant taste have ever ventured upon it in the solemn addresses of the pulpit, any farther than in narrating the dignified histories, apologues and parables of holy scripture; always finding the lightness and domestic familiarity, of what are properly called stories, have excited the ridicule or disgust of the educated part of their audiences.

6. Ex.—What other reasons are there, which seem to make this light stile of narration so unsuitable to clerical use?

RES.—The sacred and sublime nature of religious subjects; the solemnity of the places dedicated to the worship of the high and holy one of eternity; the sanctity of an ordained priesthood; and the indispensable obligations of its ministers to consult alike the serious edification and due respect of all classes of their hearers; however the lowest may be wanting to themselves.

7. Ex.—Is then the practice of extemporary preaching to be recommended in the established church?

RES.—As it generally leads to this light humour of story-telling, and its burlesque effects, to mention no other absurdities so abundantly springing from it, there seems the wisest reasons for abstaining from it.

8. Ex.—May not vanity and affectation of popular applause, never soberly to be courted by the true minister of the gospel, be often supposed to have their share in the motives to this practice?

Res.—This is too probable.

9. Ex.—But can it be affirmed, that the parables of their divine master, and his unwritten discourses, were meant for examples of both these practices, viz.: extemporary preaching, and of story-telling?

Res.—Affirmed it may be, and has been, but with little shew of reason. The wonderful powers of his divine mind, and the certain inspiration of his apostles by the holy spirit, made the mechanical helps of writing then perfectly unnecessary; and gifts of the same nature, and nothing less perhaps, would alone justly make them so now. And how little countenance our modern tales, in the pulpits of the tabernacle, &c. gain from the parables of our Lord, will appear to any discerning and sober mind on the slightest comparison. His parables are beautiful allegories, and such as could never have come *without premeditation* from any thing less than a divine mind. They are full of striking imagery; always intelligible, but never familiar; lively, but never vulgar; and have ever been found to affect equally the hearts and imaginations

of the best educated persons, and of the most illiterate ; whereas, the stories introduced into the extemporary harangues alluded to, though suitable enough to the taste of the vulgar, and fit only for their merry-makings at a country wake, never fail to disgust the better classes of every church audience, and the serious and sensible part of all orders in our congregations.



RY

This book is DUE on the last
date stamped below.

10M-11-50(2555) 470

REMINGTON RAND - 20

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 080 162 1

PZ
8.2
L569f

